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Islamic Marriage And Sexual Etiquette For Muslims Young And Old

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful!

I would first like to begin by informing the reader of this document that the word "Shariah" refers to the directives of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H); whereas, the word "Fiqh" pertains to a set of laws established by the Muslim jurists. Therefore, the Islamic Shariah is restricted solely to the commands issued in the Quran and the Sunnah; while Fiqh on the other hand focuses mainly on those matters in which the Quran and Sunnah are silent. With this being said, I will attempt to present the Islamic perspective regarding marriage and sexual etiquette for Muslims, both young and old.

When a Muslim first experiences sexual desire:

When it becomes apparent that one's child is experiencing sexual desires, it is extremely imperative that the child's parents or guardians effectively address the matter at hand. The child in question should feel confident that they can reveal and discuss every thought which enters their mind. Therefore, from a young age, parents and guardians must ensure that an atmosphere exists in their household which is conducive to the education and expression of their child's concerns regarding the subject of sex. Simply possessing a mindset in which one believes that the subject of sex is taboo is totally unacceptable. Moreover, opting to believe that if one were to never mention the subject of sex, that the thought of it would never enter their child's mind is extremely irrational. In fact, it is counterproductive; because, it could result in the child pursuing answers regarding this subject from peers or even divergent un-Islamic sources.

Sexual desire is a blessing from Allah; and as such, one must be properly educated in this subject-matter if they are to be successful in dealing with it, so that this very blessing does not become a burdensome curse. With this being said, one must not view their sexual desire as a curse or inclination from Shaytan; rather, it should be view as a personal motivator from Allah to pursue marriage. My reason for making this point is due

to the fact that a number of children whom have been taught that sexual desires are evil, may elect to hid the occurrence of a wet dream (nocturnal emissions) resulting from sexual desires in an attempt to ignore what they believe to be evil and immoral feelings. The evidence supporting my position is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari which reads: "**The good dream comes from Allah and the bad dream comes from the Shaytan. So if any one of you sees a bad dream which frightens him, let him spit drily to his left and seek refuge with Allah from its evil, then it will not harm him.**" Thus, Islamic sexual mis-education at the hands of a parent or guardian will likely produce misguided children with the mental tendency to ignore an erotic dream versus revealing it to their parents or guardians; believing that by doing so, the inclination will simply dissipate and cease to enter their mind.

It is also worth mentioning that many Muslims actually experience their first sexual desires prior to puberty. With this being said, a parent or guardian should be prepared to discuss the signs of sexual desires such as an erection or a wet dream. As a matter of fact, in a hadith collected by Bukhari that was narrated by Umm Salama, the wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), Umm-Sulaim, the wife of Abu Talha actually approached the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) regarding the

matter of wet dreams. The hadith in question reads as follows: **"Verily, Allah is not shy of (telling you) the Truth. Is it necessary for a woman to take a 'ghusl' (full bath of purification) after she has a wet dream (nocturnal sexual discharge?)' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, 'Yes, if she notices a discharge.' Um Salama, the wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) then covered her face (due to bashfulness) and asked, 'O Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.)! Does a woman get a (sexual) discharge?' He (P.B.U.H.) replied, 'Yes, and that is why the child resembles its mother.'"** Therefore, if the companions of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) engaged in the practice of asking him about intimate details of a sexual nature, then every child has the right to pose these same questions to their parents and guardians.

When a Muslim first notices a sexual discharge:

If a female sees herself in a dream having intercourse, the incident should be regarded as something natural; because, females experience erotic dreams that can result in a wet dream just as their male counterparts do. However, it is important to note that merely having an erotic dream does not constitute having a wet dream; because, a wet dream is only established upon the detection of discharge from one's sex organ after having such dreams. If there is no discharge detected upon

awakening, then one does not have to purify their body with a complete ghusl; because, in the absence of sexual discharge being present, the dream in question will be merely regarded as erotic. Hence, Islam makes it clear that not only males are permitted to lawfully experience sexual desires. As such, Muslim parents and guardians must be extremely careful not to allow their reasoning or cultural practices to motivate them to take steps to subjugate their daughters ability to fulfill their sexual desires; such as engaging in un-Islamic acts of female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision.

Female genital mutilation

Performing female genital mutilation for nonmedical reasons is a grave act of oppression that one can never be liberated from! Even the act of circumcision, wherein the foreskin of the penis is removed must be done solely for medical reasons which stem from a religious commandment. However, even as the foreskin is removed from the penis, a male is still able to experience sexual fulfillment; because, the head of the penis, which is the main erogenous zone of the male sex organ, still remains intact and unscathed. Unfortunately, with the practice of female genital mutilation, which does not stem from a religious commandment, the clitoris, which is the main erogenous zone on

the female body, instead of being modified to diminish the occurrence of excess arousal or heightened sensitivity as in the case of Persistent Genital Arousal disorder (PGAD), the entire clitoris is often removed as in the case of Type I female genital mutilation. Moreover, in addition to a complete clitoridectomy as in the case of Type I FGM, the entire clitoris and all or part of the labia minora (Type II FGM) will be removed. Lastly, in extreme cases, a total infibulation or Type III FGM, which is often referred to as "pharaonic circumcision" is performed. In this instance, the entire clitoris and all or part of the labia minora are removed, with the labia majora being sewn closed over the vagina, while leaving a small opening at the vulva for the passage of urine and the release of menstrual blood. Furthermore, as if the extreme Types of FGM were not traumatic enough, in many instances these procedures leave the opening of the vagina too small to even be penetrated by the husband when a marriage is consummated. Therefore, in order for sexual intercourse to be possible, the husband or one of his female relatives must re-cut the skin from the labia majora that was sewn over the vaginal opening to make penetration possible.

With being said, how then is this dreaded practice attributed to Islam? Labeling FGM an Islamic practice is quite

perplexing; because, Islam clearly prohibits Muslims from changing the creation of Allah. In fact, a Muslim cannot even file their teeth from its natural pattern to make gaps in them; which was a means of beautification in certain ancient cultures. Furthermore, Allah even says in Surah Al-Ghafir (40:64) of the Quran that he has created man in a perfect design. The verse in question reads as follows: **"Allah is the One who made the Earth a habitat for you, and the sky as a structure, and He designed you, and has perfected your design."** Moreover, since the first woman was made after the first man, and Allah clearly says in the above mentioned verse that he has "perfected" are design, it is actually blasphemous for an individual to believe that they are somehow able to perform a procedure that will make the female more God-fearing and virtuous than the manner in which Allah originally created her.

It is said that the best among wives are those whom are modest while out in the public; yet, are extremely passionate towards their husbands while inside the home. This fact is evident from the narration of Ibn Majah which reads: **"I advise you to marry young women, for they have sweeter lips...and are more passionate in their embrace"** Therefore, how can it be expected for a wife to be passionate towards her husband if a clitoridectomy has been performed on her to totally eliminate

her ability to experience sexual stimulation? It is also worth mentioning that many non-Muslims have a tendency to present ahadith out of context to justify their position against Islam. As such, some present ahadith which clearly show that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not abolish female genital mutilation; however, they fail to report the context of his statements on the matter; i.e., that he instructed the one performing the procedure to take special care not to cut the vagina to the extent that a female would lose her ability to experience sexual fulfillment. This fact is clearly evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Umm Atiyyah Al-Ansariyyah narrated: **"A woman used to perform circumcision in Medina. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said to her: 'Do not cut severely as that is better for a woman and more desirable for a husband.'"** Hence, this hadith, although it is daif/weak (as reliable as those verses in the bible considered to be direct statements of Prophet Jesus), still makes it clear that it is beneficial for a female that her vagina is not mutilated to the point wherein she is unable to experience sexual desire; and that it is more desirable for a husband to have a wife who is capable of being passionate towards him.

I am in no way to be considered an Islam scholar. However, I am aware that if one desires to make a ruling on a particular

matter, they must look at the preponderance of the evidence versus merely taking a hadith out of context to suit their agenda. With this being said, I have yet to see a non-Muslim state that female genital mutilation actually predated Islam. In fact, the very term "pharaonic circumcision" which is often attributed to the extreme type of female genital mutilation in which the entire clitoris and all or part of the labia minora are removed, with the labia majora being sewn closed over the vagina, while leaving a small opening at the vulva for the passage of urine and the release of menstrual blood, is called so because it was the main type of FGM prevalent in ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs. Furthermore, Leonard Kouba and Judith Muasher in their March, 1985, Journal article titled: Female Circumcision in Africa: An Overview, *African Studies Review,* Volume 28, No. 1, p. 95; state: "There is no conclusive evidence to indicate where female circumcision first originated and how it was initially performed. Circumcised females have been discovered among the mummies of the ancient Egyptian. Herodotus, the Greek historian found the Egyptians practicing male and female circumcision when he visited their country around the fifth century BC."

With this being said, instead of slandering Islam and purporting that it encourages female genital mutilation, Islam's

position on female circumcision should actually be labeled as female genital modification. It is also important to note that that female genital modification that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not prohibit might have actually been performed primarily on either those females who suffered from biological issues which resulted in heightened stimulation of the clitoris in the absence of sexual desire, or on those with an uncontrollable libido, whom were given the procedure to diminish (not extinguish) their heightened sexual desire at a time prior to puberty; i.e., at a time in a female's life before an actual marriage could be legally consummated; wherein she would not be able to satisfy her sexual desires with her husband; or even in the case of a married female whose sexual urges were so extreme that frequent intercourse with her husband failed to extinguish her uncontrollable sexual urges to the point that she actually contemplated committing zina/adultery. It is also worth mentioning that among the newest fads in female cosmetic surgery is the practice of vaginal reconstruction surgery. This type of surgery includes Vaginoplasty (vaginal rejuvenation and tightening), Labiaplasty (labia reduction and beautification), and Hymenoplasty (reconstruction of the hymen to return it to a pre-sexual/virginal state). The supporters of these procedures maintain that the appearance a female’s vaginal region can have a devastating effect on her quality of life; namely, it can

damage her self-esteem, diminish her sexual desire and fulfillment, ruin her love life, and even cause vaginal discomfort. As such, they believe that cosmetic vaginal surgery can adequately reignite sexual excitement, restore self-esteem and rejuvenate their love lives.

The irony is that vaginal reconstruction surgery involves cutting the vagina in a manner that was basically suggested by Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.); i.e., not cutting so severely as to injure the vagina. Yet, there are no campaigns against this practice declaring it to be a barbaric and shameful practice. Furthermore, the practice of Hymenoplasty (reconstruction of the hymen to return it to a pre-sexual/virginal state) is actually un-Islamic and down-right deceptive; especially, if a woman were to engage in unmarried sex and then elected to undergo the procedure in order to pass herself off as a virgin. Lastly, there is no harm in undergoing Aesthetic vaginal procedures to remove excess skin from around the clitoris/clitoral hood in order to regain sexual vitality that may have be lost as a result of aging, child birth, etc.; however, regardless of the motives for surgically modifying the vagina/clitoris, care must be taken to comply with the instruction of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) and not do so in a manner that will totally diminish the female's ability to experience sexual gratification. The

Muslim ummah also should not go to the opposite extreme and adopt the belief that there is no need to ever modify a female's vagina/clitoris; because, simply failing to acknowledge the reality of a problem does not mean that it will not manifest itself. Take Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder, also known as PGAD or Restless Genital Syndrome or Persistent Genital Arousal Syndrome, for example. It is a condition that is generally characterized by unrelenting, spontaneous and uncontainable genital arousal in females which may or may not be accompanied by engorgement. What is more, arousal is generally not linked to sexual desire.

According to Christian Nordqvist of Medical News Today, "A female plagued with PGAD may experience episodes of intense arousal (without sexual desire) several times a day, for weeks and even months. Climaxing (reaching orgasm) may alleviate symptoms for a while. However, in many cases the symptoms generally return within a few hours. Moreover, the symptoms usually return suddenly and without warning; thus, a female plagued by this condition cannot usually identify the triggers in order to avoid them." It is also worth mentioning that this condition has only recently been classified in medical literature as a distinct syndrome. Furthermore, unlike Priapism in males, which is a type of Persistent Genital Arousal Disorder

wherein a male experiences persistent penile erection without sexual desire and is treated with either drugs, drainage of blood from the penis, or anesthes, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV does not even recognize PGAD as a diagnosable medical condition. Therefore, in view of these facts, it is extremely difficult to truly determine just how common PGAD is among females; primarily, because many sufferers may either be too ashamed to discuss the matter or embarrassed to seek medical assistance.

Just imagine how embarrassing it would be for a female Muslim to explain to a non-Muslim doctor that she is experiencing constant sexual arousal; then praying that she does not become aroused during the actual examination to the point where she is perceived as being lustful or a nymphomaniac. With this in mind, just imagine how embarrassing it would be for the female in question to report the condition to her mother or female guardian. If the very thought of this scenario is almost inconceivable, just imagine how embarrassing it would be for a female to be examined by a male doctor in this instance. Thus, it should now be clear as to why Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) strongly encouraged the mass education of females; which is another fact that the Islamophobes have be working hard to conceal from the masses. A significant portion of Muslim females

should become doctors to address the needs of female patients in an all-female setting.

Further information of on the subject of persistent genital arousal disorder maintains that if symptoms of PGAD are ignored and not acted upon, a female plagued with this condition may experience waves of spontaneous orgasms. As such, it is said to be a debilitating condition which can leave a female unable to focus on everyday tasks. Furthermore, according to the findings of Sandra Leiblum, a Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School - University of Medicine and Dentistry, "There are **5 criteria for a diagnosis of PGAD** which are actually regarded as truly valid indicators; namely:

- Involuntary genital and clitoral arousal that continues for an extended period (hours, days, months).
- No cause for the persistent genital arousal can be identified.
- The genital arousal is not associated with feelings of sexual desire.
- The persistent sensations of genital arousal feel intrusive and unwanted.
- After one or more orgasms, the physical genital arousal does not go away."

Even worst, as a result of the antics of Islamophobes in their attempts to demonize Islam by associating it with the dreadful practice of female genital mutilation, many researchers and scientists might be reluctant to even pursue modifying the vagina as a possible solution to the problem PGAD. Thus, resulting in victims of PGAD being neglected and forced to cope with the anguish of their condition without the much needed medical/psychological assistance that they require; as in the case of thirty-nine year-old Gretchen Molannen whom the Tampa Bay Times said actually struggled with this rare condition that left her sexually aroused to the point that she experienced as many as fifty orgasms in a day. According to the Tampa Bay Times, Molannen had struggled with PGAD for the past 16 years of her life; beginning one day at age 23 when she felt sexually aroused as if a switch turned on. The only temporary relief she got was from hours of masturbation, which she detested because of her religious upbringing. Even then, the agony would only subside for minutes. Molannen, who felt as though she could no longer function normally, committed suicide a day after her story went public. According to the Tampa Bay Times, "It was a tragic end to a woman who lived with what she thought for years was a secret shame."

In view of the above mentioned information, I would like to reiterate my introductory statements regarding the issue of

Shariah versus Fiqh; because, it is imperative that any form of female genital mutilation wherein a female is denied her ability to experience sexual gratification must be eradicated, while productive procedures which may improve one's quality of life should be encouraged. As stated earlier, the word "Shariah" refers to the directives of the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H); whereas, the word "Fiqh" pertains to a set of laws established by the Muslim jurists. With this being said, it is imperative to highlight the fact that there is no commandment in the Quran or Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) which says that female genital modification is a religious requirement, encouraged, or prohibited. Furthermore, even the Fiqh of the four main schools of jurisprudence are not in consensus regarding this matter. What is of even more importance is the fact that neither the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) nor the wives or daughters of any of the previous Prophets of God underwent female genital mutilation. Interestingly enough, the overwhelming majority of the female sahaba did not receive any type of genital mutilation.

Ibrahim Lethome Asmani and Maryam Sheikh Abdi in their 2008 publication titled, *De-linking Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting from Islam,* sheds even more light on the myth of female genital mutilation as an Islamic practice when it states: "A careful and

objective look at the Quran reveals that there is no single verse supporting FGM/C. However, there are verses that proponents of the practice use to support their stance. Quran 16:123, for example, reads, '... follow the milat (religion) of Ibrahim.' In this verse, Muslims are urged to do all that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) did, including male circumcision, among many other actions that form part of his milat. However, in the context of circumcision, this verse only applies to male circumcision since there is evidence that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was circumcised at the age of 80. In a Hadith narrated by Abu Hureira (RA) Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Ibrahim, the friend of Allah, was circumcised when he attained the age of 80 years. And he was circumcised at al-Qaddum' (Bukhari and Muslim). There is nothing to show that either of the two wives of Prophet Ibrahim (AS), Sarah and Hajar (May Allah remember and be satisfied with them both), were circumcised; hence, nothing to support FGM/C although proponents of FGM/C believe that Hajar was circumcised by Sarah. It is alleged that when Hajar conceived, Sarah was jealous and vowed to kill her, but Prophet Ibrahim (AS) advised her to pierce Hajar’s ears and cut part of her genitalia to nullify the oath. This allegation is baseless and is only a myth. Even if, for argument’s sake, it is taken to be true, then Hajar was subjected to circumcision as a punishment, and not as a virtuous act or a tradition; nor does

the story connote a religious requirement or a common practice, because there is no evidence and nothing to show that Sarah herself was circumcised.'"

Lastly, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said in a hadith of Bukhari: "**Whoever among you is troubled by his sexual urge, let him marry - for marriage causes the eyes to be lowered and safeguards the private parts**." Nowhere do we hear the directive to engage in female genital mutilation from the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). In fact, it is hypocritical to engage in female genital mutilation to curb the desire of the females while leaving the young males to be plagued by their desires without any type of physical modification to their sexual organ.

If parents would permit their children to marry at the onset of puberty as encouraged by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), the Muslim ummah would not have to surgically intervene to maintain the integrity of our society. Not only would the unchecked desires of the youth be lawfully controlled, we would also be honoring the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) wish to have the largest body of followers among Allah's Prophets. This fact is evident from the hadith of Ahmad which states that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**Marry the loving and fertile, for I will compete with the other Prophets with the number of my followers on the Day of Qiyama (resurrection)**."

It is also very important that the rights of the Muslim ummah be honored. With this being said, every Muslim should make it their business to ensure that marriage is being encouraged in their respective community. Thus, **at least in every Jummah khutbah, the local Imam should be encouraged to announce to his community that if there are any individuals desiring marriage, they should contact him so that the rite can be performed**.

I am stressing this issue due to the fact that as a revert to Islam, I am aware of a trend wherein Muslim men unfortunately pursue marriages with non-Muslim women; resulting in our Muslim sisters being neglected and dishonored. It is my opinion that this phenomenon occurs because Muslim men are simply not exposed to eligible Muslim women, and Muslim matrimonial websites which could serve as a possible solution are extremely frowned upon by most communities.

A number of Muslim men that I have spoken to have expressed their dissatisfaction with the way that marriage planning is being conducted in the West. The Muslim men in question were respected members of their individual communities, yet they were dissuaded from marrying the Muslimah of their choice because of nationalism/tribalism. As a result, those Muslim brothers elected to conducted marriages with Non-Muslims. Yes, those Muslim brothers have fulfilled their marriage obligation;

however, the Muslim sisters in question have been neglected. The sisters are being abandoned because the Muslim brothers from their respective countries often desire a wife from another homeland; while the American brothers with an ardent desire to marry these immigrant sisters are being met with severe opposition; thus, preventing the union from ever taking place.

It is a mercy from Allah that beauty has been made subjective. Therefore, if one is short, tall, skinny, an amputee, disfigured, etc., there is someone that Allah has made to be attracted to you. Khadija Bint Khuwaylid was a 40 year-old middle aged wealthy woman; Aiesha was very young and petite at the age six when she was married to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.); Sawda Bint Zam'a was rather plump, with a jolly, kindly disposition; Safiyya Bint Huyayy was a Jewess, and Maria Al-Qibtiyya was the daughter of a Coptic father and Greek mother. Peace be upon all of them. Thus, it is evident from the examples of the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that he did not engage in tribalism or nationalism.

In fact, one of the main reasons why fetishes exist in our society is because we have empowered certain individuals to establish societal norms based on their viewpoint; and as such, everyone who disagrees in this regard is regarded as being a deviant. This type of mindset is worst than cultural

imperialism. Every Muslim should be motivated to get to know someone from another culture via marriage; because, as evident from the above mentioned examples, it was the Sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) actually married a Jewess in Safiyya Bint Huyayy. However, there are Muslims today who boldly refuse to marry their child to another "Muslim" from a different tribe, nation, social class, etc. Sadly, these same individuals would hypocritically marry their daughters to non-Muslims who have no intent to revert to Islam. Just ponder over the seriousness of this matter. Some Muslim parents consider it dishonorable to marry their child to another Muslim from a different tribe or nation; yet, they find some type of honor in marrying their daughter to a non-Muslim man while the Quran clearly prohibits this practice. The evidence against this practice is found in Surah Al Baqarah (2:221) which reads: **"Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe. A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe. A man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever, even though he allures you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of bliss) and forgiveness and makes**

His Signs clear to mankind; That they may celebrate His praise." May we all be protected from living in Hell on Earth and be rewarded with Jannah Firdous.

Taking preventative measures to ensure that one's child is lawfully keeping their sexual desires in check:

I feel as though it is safe to say that every Muslim parent is of the belief that it is strictly forbidden to allow their children to engage in premarital sex; even if they do not always comply with this command which is detailed in the Quran and Sunnah. In fact, the punishment for not complying with this commandment is even found in Surah Baqarah (24:2) of the Quran, which reads as follows: "**The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes: Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the Believers witness their punishment**." Now as one can clearly see, sexual immorality is a serious matter in Islam. Furthermore, not only are those individuals whom are guilty of fornication to receive 100 lashes, the punishment must also be administered publicly in order to serve as a deterrent to others.

On face value, this type of punishment for premarital sex might seem a bit extreme to many; however, the dishonor to one's character who engages in premarital sex remains long after the scars from the lashes have healed. The severity of the dishonor to one's character is evident from the subsequent verse of Surah Baqarah (24:3) which reads: **"Let no man guilty of adultery or fornication marry any but a woman similarly guilty, or an Unbeliever: nor let any but such a man or an Unbeliever marry such a woman: to the Believers such a thing is forbidden."** Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim narrated by 'Ubada b. As-Samit regarding the fixed punishments for the person guilty of committing illegal sex acts reads as follows: **"Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Receive (teaching) from me, receive (teaching) from me. Allah has ordained a way for those (women). When an unmarried male commits adultery with an unmarried female (they should receive) one hundred lashes and banishment for one year. And in the case of a married male committing adultery with a married female, they shall receive one hundred lashes and be stoned to death.'"** Thus, it should now be clear that once one becomes labeled as being unchaste due to an act of fornication or adultery, this type of person is restricted solely to marrying others of the same stature; that is however, if capital punishment is not to be administered upon the guilty parties.

Carelessly acting upon one's sexual desires can have a devastating effect on one's future. Nevertheless, Allah is the most merciful, the most compassionate. So, as a mercy from Allah, any person who has not attained puberty is not to be held accountable for any illegal sex acts committed; such as playing house, which is common in the Western world wherein a boy and a girls act out the role of a husband and wife by hugging, kissing, etc. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Aiesha reportedly said: "**The pen has been lifted for three: the insane until he regains his sanity, the child until he reaches puberty, and the sleeper until he wakes up.**" Furthermore, those individuals guilty of committing illegal sex acts but have yet to be discovered by the public for said acts, will not be punished as long as they do not openly confess to their crime. This is a serious mercy from Allah! The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Abd-Allaah reported: "**A man came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), I fondled a woman in the furthest outskirts of Medina but I did not actually have intercourse with her. Here I am, judge me as you wish.' 'Umar said to him: 'Allah had covered you, you should have covered yourself (i.e., you should not have spoken of it).' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not reply at all, so the man got up and left. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) then sent a man to follow him.**

'Call him and recite to him the ayah (interpretation of the meaning): And perform the salah at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds (i.e., small sins). That is a reminder (advice) for the mindful (those who accept advice) [Hood 11:114].' A man who was present said: 'O Prophet of Allah (P.B.U.H.), is this just for him?' He said, 'No, it is for all the people.'"

Any type of Illegal sex act in Islam is generally referred to as zina. Zina encompasses both extramarital and premarital sex. It is also important to note that actual penetration does not have to occur in order to constitute an act of zina; because, the Shariah has defined it as any unlawful interaction of a sexual nature between a male and female whom are permitted to marry each other. Furthermore, if the person guilty of performing zina sincerely repents to Allah, then Allah will forgive the guilty party and overlook their sin; if the act of repentance was truly sincere. The fact that Allah is truly most merciful and oft forgiving is evident from Surah Al-Furqan (25:70-71) of the Quran which reads: **"Unless he (the guilty party) repents, believes, and works righteous deeds, for Allah will change the evil of such persons into good, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, and whoever repents and does good has truly turned to Allah with an (acceptable) conversion."**

It is also worth mentioning that since most children in Islamic societies are aware of the seriousness of committing illegal sex acts, during adolescence, they often resort to masturbation as a means of curving their sexual desires. Masturbation, although viewed by many as an acceptable pacifier to satisfy one's sexual desires, is actually discouraged in Islam. On face value, masturbation could be viewed as ideal; but in reality, masturbation does not assist with diminishing one's sexual desires; rather it increases the frequency of these desires occurring.

Stimulation to the sex organs is extremely pleasurable; so, administering pleasuring techniques to these areas only makes one desire this stimulation on a continual basis. Unfortunately, like most stimulating acts, masturbation only provides temporary relief before the person engaging in it actually decides to pursue even more advanced methods of stimulation. Before long, providing personal sexual pleasure could result in an act of mutual masturbation wherein one engages in this act with a partner. When any form of masturbation, including mutual masturbation with a partner is deemed by an individual as them having full control of their desires, this individual is in a severe state of peril. The reason being, individuals with this frame of mind could even be influenced by their partner to

pursue fellatio, cunnilingus, and even sodomy, which are believed by many unmarried youth to be acts which does not invalidate one's virginity because actual penetration does not occur between the vagina and penis. However, according to the Islamic Shariah, these acts are clearly modes of zina which are punishable by a penalty of a hundred lashes.

To further avoid being in this type of predicament, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) even warned against looking or staying alone with individuals whom one is permitted to marry. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**Not one of you should meet a woman alone unless she is accompanied by a relative within the prohibited degrees.**" The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) also reported in a hadith of Tirmidhi: "**No man ever stays alone with a woman but Satan becomes their third (companion);**" i.e., influencing them to engage in what is forbidden; like going from kissing and heavy petting, to oral and anal sex. Also, the evidence proving that satisfying one's sexual desires via masturbation and other minor forms of zina is extremely hazardous to one's spiritual health is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Suhail Ibn Sai'd narrated that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**Whoever gives me the assurance (not to unlawfully use) what is between their jaws and their legs**

(i.e. the tongue and the private parts), I will give them the assurance of paradise."

With this being said, to help children keep their sexual desires in check, Muslim parents and guardians should begin advising their children early in life to lower their gaze when encountering members of the opposite sex whom they are permitted to marry. Muslim parents should also ensure that their children observe a modest dress style as not to attract any unnecessary attention towards themselves. The evidence for these directives is found in Surah Nur of the Quran (24:30 - 31) which reads: **"Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do. And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or the slaves whom their right hands possess, or male servants free of physical needs, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex; and that they should not strike**

their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O ye Believers! turn ye all together towards Allah, that ye may attain Bliss." Also, in a hadith collected by Tirmidhi, Abu Umamah narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'If any Muslim happens to look at a woman's beauties and then lowers his eyes, Allah will produce for him an act of worship whose sweetness he will experience**.'"

Regarding the issue of modest dress as a means of helping members of the opposite gender to lower their gaze, the garments of said individuals should not be formfitting or transparent. In fact, medical experts maintain that wearing Skinny Jeans can actually pinch the nerves of the hips resulting in a condition known as Meralgia Paresthetica, wherein the wearer of tight jeans often experiences tingling, numbness, and pain. Other possible side-effects include nerve damage, abdominal pain, and blood clots. Likewise, wearing trendy high-heel shoes can also increase the likelihood of circulation problems occurring, by tilting the pelvis forward. In essence, just as one would not choose to wear shoes that are several sizes too small, the same logic should be applied when purchasing clothes for children.

The Muslim dress style is not design to subjugate anyone; rather to preserve one's dignity and honor. Therefore, Muslim parents should not force their daughters to wear the niqab

against their will; especially, in instances wherein the Wale of the Muslimah is not interested in seeking a husband for her or desires to keep her restricted to the confines of the home. If this is the case, the Muslim female in question could spend her entire life without any eligible Muslim male ever knowing that she is available for marriage. It is also important to reiterate that the Quran says to cover everything on a female except what must ordinarily appear; namely, the face and hands.

Allah has made women extremely alluring to men, and vise versa. Therefore, through the course of acting upon the mutual attraction in which we share, Allah simply desires that we conduct ourselves in a lawful manner. However, he does not encourage going to extremes while doing so. We Muslims should pursue the sirat al-mustaqeem when addressing the needs of our children. Therefore, a parent should neither be too easy as to not enforce wearing hijab nor be too extreme as to force their daughters to cover everything and confine them to the home without any exposure to the outside world; i.e., they must be afforded the opportunity to get married.

Muslim parents should also advise their children on how to choose the ideal spouse in order to have a happy and successful marriage. This is in fact the sunnah; because, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) even informed his companions as to which

attributes in a potential wife were the most ideal. The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Ibn Majah which states: "**Choose carefully for your seed. Marry those who are equivalent (or "qualified") and give to them in marriage.**" Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abdullah Bin Amr narrates that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**The whole world is a provision, and the best object of benefit of the world is the pious woman.**" Also, a hadith of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Hurairah relates that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**Men choose women for four reasons: for their money, for their rank, for their beauty and for their religion, but marry one who is religious and you will succeed.**" Nevertheless, there should still be attraction between the bride and groom. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**When one of you asks a woman in marriage, if he is able to look at what will induce him to marry her, he should do so. ...**" Thus, justifying why I feel as though a parent or guardian should not force their unmarried females to cover their face. Furthermore, just as the above mentioned hadith states, "the potential groom should look at the face as a means of inducement prior to making the ultimate decision; because, it seems highly unlikely that a man will opt marry a woman whose face he is unable to see.

The female also has the right to be informed about undesirable traits of a potential husband even if it is displeasing to him. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Fatimah, daughter of Ques came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and said: **"Abo-Jahm and Moa'weyah both proposed to marry me, who should I accept? The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, 'Moa'weah is a poor man, and Abo-Jahm beats his woman.'"** As we can clearly see, Prophet (P.B.U.H.) mentioned something that the two men hated to be mentioned; yet he revealed this information because it is a right that belongs to a potential bride and groom. Furthermore, the Quran in Surah Nur (24:26) reads: **"Women impure are for men impure, and men impure for women impure and women of purity are for men of purity, and men of purity are for women of purity ...."**

It is also worth mentioning that most of the information contained within this document focuses more so on addressing the needs of the female; because, we live in a male dominant society, and as such, the societal norms are actually skewed in favor of the male members of society. Therefore, a young boy and girl can frequently engage in zina throughout their adolescent years; however, our society will generally view the actions of the male less harshly than his female counterpart. In fact, in Western nations, the male who engages in premarital sex is

usually viewed as being a "stud," while the female on the other hand is often regarded as a "slut." It is an extremely unfortunate dilemma.

As a revert to Islam, I have witnessed firsthand the heartbreak that many Muslim females face when they discover that a suitor is interested in them as a potential candidate for a wife, only to be passed over as soon as the suitors are informed about the acts of zina the females in question had committed in the past. These acts of zina are usually carried out with a so-called boyfriend figure, which is illegal in Islam. However, due to the hypocrisy of societal norms, the so-called boyfriend's past is not held against him; because, he is merely viewed as sowing his wild oats! The female on the other hand is not afforded this luxury. Yes, everyone encouraged her to spend time with her so-called boyfriend figure; yet, those same encouragers will probably be the same individuals who will air her dirty laundry as soon as she desires to get her life in order by becoming a chaste woman.

In view of the above mentioned information, I would like to make it clear to all young women, that as a revert to Islam I engaged in fornication throughout most of my adolescent years. I was fortunate enough to experience all the enjoyments of women prior to taking my shahadah (consciously becoming a Muslim). I

use the word "fortunate" because I can no longer be tempted by what I have already experienced. However, unlike me, most people who were born into a Muslim household are constantly tempted by the allure of premarital sex. Yet, in all honesty, I want to confess to the female readers of this document that through all my sexual interactions with various females, the most attractive women that I have ever casted my eyes upon were Muslim women wearing hijab. I cannot explain it. It is as though Allah has placed a screen of beauty over the hijabi sisters that words cannot describe. Furthermore, what I find most ironic is the fact that back in those days, whenever I would see a non-Muslim female wearing skimpy clothing with her hair exposed, the first thought which entered my mind was that I should get to know her only for sexual purposes. However, whenever I would see a Muslimah wearing hijab, the first thought which entered my mind was marriage.

Now, for the purpose of proving a point, I suggest that every female should view themselves as a very expensive automobile. Then, imagine a potential buyer visiting an expensive auto dealership in search of the car of his dreams which a wealthy sponsor was willing to purchase for him. At this dealership there is every brand of car imaginable. The dealership has full-sized luxury vehicles such as Rolls-Royce

and Bentley; SUVs such as the Cadillac Escalade or Lincoln Navigator; sports cars such as Lamborghini and Ferrari; basically, a wide variety of vehicles to match the various sizes and colors of women in the world.

So, the buyer then asks the salesperson if he could test-drive a couple of the vehicles before making the ultimate decision. The salesperson agrees; however, the buyer informs him that he would like to test-drive each of the vehicles for several months. The salesperson responds in dismay, asking the buyer if he is insane for making such an impractical request. The salesperson tries to reason with the potential buyer by informing him that if he allowed him to test-drive each of the vehicles for several months as he desired, he would not be able to sell any of the vehicles that he rejected. He made the point clear when he stated, "No person in their right mind is going to pay top dollar for a brand new car with over twenty-thousand test-driver miles on the odometer!" The potential buyer then responded by suggesting that he be permitted to drive the vehicles of his choice a mile or so down the street before making his final decision. This way, the cars retain their value (desired purchase price) and both the potential buyer and salesperson will benefit from the transaction; i.e., the buyer obtains the car of his choice and the dealership/salesperson

will obtain the desired profit from the financial transaction, in addition to preserving the value of each of the vehicles test-driven by the buyer.

Now apply this scenario to an actual woman. Sisters, I love you for the sake of Allah, so I am going to make my point crystal clear. If a man is interested in you, he must honor you by only engaging in what will bring each of you benefit. Therefore, just as the salesperson suggested that the buyer test-drive the car for a mile or so, a potential suitor will meet with you in the company of your Wale (male guardian) and get to know you through halal (lawful) means. Then if there is chemistry between you, the female should then inform her Wale that she is willing to accept his proposal. The suitor then pays the females asking price in the form of a dowry of her choice and a contract with terms that both parties agree to. Then the female will bestow the ultimate honor upon her male suitor by allowing him to take her hand in marriage with the objective to live a joyful life together in accordance with the commandments of Allah.

Lastly, for those individuals who might have made a number of mistakes in the past regarding their chastity, do not despair; because, Allah is truly merciful to those individuals whom have seen the errors of their behavior and now seek to make

sincere taubah (repentance) with the agenda of living their life as Allah has commanded. The mercy of Allah is that you will be judged by the last thing that you do; meaning, he will view you not as the former sinner but as the now reformed Muslim. The evidence for this ruling is Surah Al Imran (3:135 - 136) of the Quran which reads: **"And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring Allah to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins, and who can forgive sins except Allah? and are never obstinate in persisting knowingly in (the wrong) they have done. For such the reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath, an eternal dwelling: How excellent a recompense for those who work (and strive)!"**

In light of the above mentioned information, it should now be perfectly clear that the ideal method for a parent or guardian to employ with regard to controlling their children's sexual desires is to pursue the practice of marriage. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abdullah narrated: **"We were with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) while we were young and had no wealth whatever. So Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty (i.e. his private parts from committing illegal sexual intercourse etc.), and**

whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power." Therefore, marriage, even in the case of a young person, is the ideal solution for keeping one's sexual desires in check.

With this being said, it is therefore imperative that a parent does not complicate the matter of marriage for their daughter when the request for is presented by a righteous Muslim; even if he is from another tribe or nation. This fact is evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**When someone with whose religion and character you are satisfied, asks to marry your daughter, agree to his request. If you do not do so, there will be corruption and great evil on Earth.**" Furthermore, if one is not able to marry, they should then pursue fasting as a secondary measure. However, acts such as monasticism and forms of mutilation designed to eliminate one's sexual desires, i.e., castration and clitoridectomy are "strictly" forbidden in Islam. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn Masud reportedly said: "**We used to fight in the holy battles in the company of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and we had no wives with us. So we said, "O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! Shall we get castrated?" The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) forbade us to do so.**" Also, another hadith of Bukhari that was narrated by Sad bin Abi

Waqqas reported: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) forbade 'Uthman bin Maz'un to abstain from marrying (and other pleasures) and if he had permitted him (to not marry), we would have gotten ourselves castrated."**

The age of marriage in Islam:

Marriage in Islam is designed to be a simple process. In fact, there was initially no minimum age for marriage in Islam; however, a bride or groom must be pubescent in order to consummate a marriage. This fact is evident from the hadith of Aiesha wherein she reported that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) married her when she was six years old and he consummated his marriage with her when she was nine years old (after she received her menses). Aiesha also reported that she remained with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for nine years till his death in the year 632. The actual hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Aiesha reads as follows: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) entered into marriage with me when I was a girl of six ... and at the time [of joining his household to consummate the marriage] I was a girl of nine years of age."**

Now before I proceed with the prerequisites of marriage in Islam, it is imperative that I shed some light on the marriage of Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) which is an extremely

controversial subject among both non-Muslims and Muslims alike. to begin, one must first determine if the marriage of Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is actually lawful in the eyes of God and compliant with modern science and biology.

Prior to Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) being born, the Bible in Numbers 31:17 - 18) reads: **"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. <u>But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves</u>."** Thus, Moses (P.B.U.H.) permitted his soldiers to keep all the women children (young girl virgins) for themselves as wives. So, it is evident that among the previous generations it was not a social taboo to marry at a young age, even if there was a significant age disparity between the bride and groom. In fact, there is not a single report from the enemies of Islam wherein they objected to the marriage between Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

The second point worth mentioning is the fact that Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not consummate their marriage until after she received her menses. Thus, she was both socially and biologically a woman according to culture in which she lived. So, even if one is not religiously inclined, they cannot even use a scientific/biological discourse to dispute the marriage between Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). In fact, to

do so would be deemed cultural imperialism and an ex-post-facto offense. One simply cannot judge Aiesha and the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) marriage, which occurred during the 7th century according to 21st century social norms. I make it a point to stress the words "social norms" because, the marriage between Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not violate any religious commandments.

According to the scientific discipline of Biology, menses (menstrual cycle) is defined as the monthly flow of blood and cellular debris from a non-pregnant uterus that begins at puberty and ceases at menopause. It is commonly divided into three phases; namely, the follicular phase, ovulation, and the luteal phase. During ovulation, a woman generally has the ability to produce an egg (ovum); at which point, she will become pregnant if the egg becomes fertilized. So, in reality, even before receiving menses, a girl can begin to ovulate.

A March 30, 2012 article in the New York Times titled, "*Puberty Before Age 10: A New 'Normal'?*" stated: "In the late 1980s, Marcia Herman-Giddens, then a physician's associate in the pediatric department of the Duke University Medical Center, started noticing that an awful lot of 8 and 9 year-olds in her clinic had sprouted pubic hair and breasts. The medical wisdom, at that time, based on a landmark 1960 study of

institutionalized British children, was that puberty began, on average, for girls at age 11. But that was not what Herman Giddens was seeing. So she started collecting data, eventually leading a study with the American Academy of Pediatrics that sampled 17,000 girls, finding that among White girls, the average age of breast budding was 9.96. Among Black girls, it was 8.87." Furthermore, according to WebMD, "Your first menstrual period is called menarche (MEN-ar-kee). It usually starts sometime between ages 11 and 14, but it can happen as early as age 9 or as late as 15. If you are a teenage girl, see your doctor if you have not started having periods by age 15. Menarche is a sign you are growing up and becoming a woman. Along with starting your period, your body is changing. You've begun to develop breasts, pubic hair, and underarm hair. And your hips have begun to widen. Menarche also means that if you have sex, you can get pregnant. You can even get pregnant in the month before your first period starts." Thus, based on the above mentioned information, it should be clear that Aiesha was even a woman according to the guidelines detailed in modern Biology.

Unfortunately, there are a number of apologetic Muslims who make it their business to deny that the marriage between Aiesha and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) occurred when she was age 6. They are entitled to their opinion. However, I would just like to

reiterate the point that it is cultural imperialism and an ex-post-facto offense to condemn the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) by judging him according to 21st century laws and social norms. Would I marry my 9 year-old daughter to a 50 year-old man? Probably not. Why? Because it goes against my cultural norms. Ironically, it is absolutely lawful for either a Jew, Christian, or Muslim to marry their first cousin. However, if you were to ask the average American Christian to marry their first cousin, they would grimace at the very thought of doing so. Why? Not because it is forbidden from a religious perspective, but because the social norms of the country have been given precedence over their religious commandments. Why then should we Muslims allow a group of people (Jews, Christians, atheists, etc.) who do not always adhere to any laws other than those which suit their desires to serve as judge, jury, and prosecutor over Islamic practices?

Lastly, if at any time after her marriage to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) wherein Aiesha felt as if she was forced to wed him against her will, she could have said so and the marriage would have been annulled; because, a woman cannot be inherited against her will. The evidence for this ruling is found in Surah Al-Nisa (4:19) of the Quran which reads: **"O ye who believe! Ye are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should ye**

treat them with harshness, that ye may Take away part of the dower ye have given them, except where they have been guilty of open lewdness; on the contrary, live with them on a footing of kindness and equity. If ye take a dislike to them, it may be that ye dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through it a great deal of good." Furthermore, in Surah Al Azab (33:12 -13) the wives of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) were given the opportunity to either leave him or stay with him, and they all chose to remain with him. The verses supporting this fact reads as follows: **"O Prophet! Say to thy Consorts: 'If it be that ye desire the life of this World, and its glitter, then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set you free in a handsome manner. But if ye seek Allah and His Apostle, and the Home of the Hereafter, verily Allah has prepared for the well-doers amongst you a great reward.'"**

Age of marriage for orphans:

It is important to note that Islam goes to great lengths to protect the interest of orphans. As such, even though the age of marriage for them is the same as other children; namely at the onset of puberty versus a specific age, the issues surrounding orphans can be slightly different. For example, if one were to read Surah Al-Nisa (4:6) of the Quran which says: **"Make trial of orphans until they reach the age of marriage; if then ye find**

sound judgment in them, release their property to them; but consume it not wastefully, nor in haste against their growing up. If the guardian is well-off, Let him claim no remuneration, but if he is poor, let him have for himself what is just and reasonable. When ye release their property to them, take witnesses in their presence: But all-sufficient is Allah in taking account." What is more, according to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, under the heading: Protecting the Property of the Orphans, it is stated: "Allah commands that the property of the orphans be surrendered to them in full when they reach the age of adolescence..." Also, under the heading: Giving Back the Property of the Orphans When They Reach Adulthood, it states: "(if then you find sound judgment in them, release their property to them,); Sa`id bin Jubayr said that this portion of the Ayah means, when you find them to be good in the religion and wise with their money. Similar was reported from Ibn `Abbas, Al-Hasan Al-Basri and others among the Imams. The scholars of Fiqh stated that when an orphan child becomes good in the religion and wise concerning money, then the inheritance that his caretaker was keeping for him should be surrendered to him."

Now, if one notices, the verse clearly says to make trial of orphans. The emphasis here is to not allow the orphan to be taken advantage of by the suitor with a sinister agenda; namely,

to either marry them and perhaps have them murdered (unknowingly to the public) in order to obtain a portion of their estate via the laws of inheritance or to manipulate them into giving away their entire estate as an act of love or generosity. Therefore, before their property is to be released to them by their guardian, it must be established that the orphan in question is competent and aware of their position in life; namely, once considered an adult under Islamic law at the onset of puberty, their guardian cannot forcefully govern their affairs. So in essence, if none of the signs of puberty are detectable, upon reaching fifteen years of age, the orphan will automatically be considered pubescent and deemed at the age of intellectual maturity. At this age for example, if an orphan girl is wooed off her feet by a suitor to the point that she is even willing to forfeit her right to a wedding dowry, even if her guardian objects, she can go to the courts to have the marriage performed. After this point, if the marriage fails, she could be left penniless and heartbroken and her former guardian will have no authority with regard to remedying her dilemma. This is also one of the reasons why a guardian is to release the property of the orphan child in the presence of two witnesses. Thus, a neutral party in the form of the two witnesses will be able to protect the honor of the former guardian who might become victimized by slander if an orphaned girl who is later swindled

out of her inheritance by her new husband and then resorts to arguing that she was not advised prior to marrying, although her decision was against her guardian's wishes or that she did not receive her entire inheritance.

The signs of puberty in Islam which enables one to consummate a marriage:

According to Islamic law, a woman is deemed to have reached puberty, making it lawful to consummate a marriage when one of the following four things occurs:

1 – **When she reaches the age of fifteen.**

2 – **When her pubic hair grows, which is hair around the private parts and armpits.**

3 – **When she emits maniy (fluid released at climax).**

4 – **When she begins her menses.**

A male on the other hand is considered to be pubescent whenever one of the following three signs appear:

1 – **Nocturnal emissions (wet dreams)**

2 – **Growth of hairs around the private parts and armpits; facial hair is not deemed an indicator.**

3 – **Reaching the age of fifteen**

The evidence supporting these pubescent rulings include the following hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn Umar narrated: **"Allah's Apostle called me to present myself in front of him on the eve of the battle of Uhud, I was fourteen years of age at that time and he did not allow me to take part in that battle, but he called me in front of him on the eve of the battle of the Trench when I was fifteen years old, and he allowed me (to join the battle)." Nafi' said, "I went to 'Umar bin 'Abdul Aziz who was Caliph at that time and related the above narration to him, He said, "This age (fifteen) is the limit between childhood and manhood," and wrote to his governors to give salaries to those who reached the age of fifteen."** Furthermore, a hadith collected by Abu Dawud reports that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) allegedly said: **"Allah does not accept the prayer of a menstruating woman (who has reached puberty) unless she wears a veil."** Regarding the issue of sexual discharge constituting a condition of puberty is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Ali related that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: **"Upon the emission of pre-ejaculatory fluid (madhi), a ritual ablution (wudu) is obliged, and upon the emission of sperm (mani), a ritual bath (ghusl) is obliged."** Lastly, according to a Hadith collected by Imam Muslim wherein Atiyyah al-Qurazi reportedly said: **"I was among the captives of Banu Qurayzah. They (the Companions) examined us, and those who had begun to grow hair**

(pubes; i.e., adults) were killed, and those who had not (children) were not killed. I was among those who had not grown hair."

In view of the above mentioned information, it is important to note that according to Mehmet Dikmen, "Reaching the age of puberty through menstruation or ejaculation is called natural puberty. When a person reaches puberty naturally, he/she becomes mukallaf, that is, his/her religious obligations start. It is possible that a boy or a girl reaches the age of puberty but the boy does not ejaculate and the girl does not menstruate. (Such a boy is called a 'murahiq' and such a girl is called a 'murahiqa'). In this case, the age of fifteen is regarded as the starting time of accountability regarding one's religious obligations. That is, when a girl or boy becomes fifteen years old, they are regarded as having reached the age of puberty even if they have not reached puberty naturally; and as such, the boy or girl in question will be regarded as mukallaf (accountable).

Pursuing marriage in Islam:

A Muslim's decision to pursue marriage is one of the most important decisions that they will ever have to make in their lifetime; and as such, it should not be taken lightly. The decision of marriage should ultimately be made after making

sincere prayer to Allah regarding the matter; prayer of istikhara (istikharah) to be specific. Istikhara means to seek goodness from Allah; thus, when one intends to perform an important task, it is strongly encouraged that they perform a sincere prayer of istikhara. In essence, the Muslim who performs a sincere prayer of istikhara is actually requesting Allah Almighty, the Knower of the unseen to guide them in the endeavor if it will benefit them in this life and the next and to protect them from it if it will not. Furthermore, in addition to performing salatul-istikhara, one should also conduct a thorough investigation of their intended spouse, with the assistance of their immediate family members.

The evidence for performing a sincere prayer of istikhara prior to engaging in a task is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allah al-Salami reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to teach his companions to make istikhaarah in all things, just as he used to teach them Surahs of the Quran. He said: 'If any one of you is concerned about a decision he has to make, then let him pray two rakahs of non-obligatory prayer, then say: Allaahumma inni astakheeruka bi 'ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa as'aluka min fadlika, fa innaka taqdiru wa laa aqdir, wa ta'lamu wa laa a'lam, wa anta 'allaam al-ghuyoob. Allaahumma fa in kunta ta'lamu haadha'l-amra**

(then the matter should be specifically mentioned) khayran li fi 'aajil amri wa aajilihi (or: fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri) faqdurhu li wa yassirhu li thumma baarik li fihi. Allaahumma wa in kunta ta'lamu annahu sharrun li fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri (or: fi 'aajili amri wa aajilihi) fasrifni 'anhu [wasrafhu 'anni] waqdur li al-khayr haythu kaana thumma radini bihi (O Allaah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power, I have none. And You know, I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things. O Allah, if in Your knowledge, this matter (then it should be mentioned by name) is good for me both in this world and in the Hereafter (or: in my religion, my livelihood and my affairs), then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge it is bad for me and for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs (or: for me both in this world and the next), then turn me away from it, [and turn it away from me], and ordain for me the good wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.'"

Lastly, it is important to note that after one has performed a sincere prayer of istikhara, it is not necessary to repeat the prayer if it was in fact performed sincerely. One has to trust in Allah! If one does not obtain what they desired

after performing a sincere prayer of istikhara they should be content; because, Allah has chosen to protect them from the harmfulness in what they desired. Therefore, even as the matter pertains to marriage, if one's intended spouse decides not to proceed with the marriage, one should not be disheartened; because, Allah has chosen to protect them from possible turmoil that could stem from said union with the intended spouse in question.

(The method of performing Salatul-Istikhara is explained in detail at the end of this document)

The process of engagement resulting from a consensual ijab (proposal) and qabul (acceptance)

After one has performed a sincere prayer of istikhara regarding their decision to pursue marriage, if the individual is a male, he should proceed by contacting the wale (Muslim male guardian) of the female (Muslim or chaste Jew or Christian) he desires to marry; namely, her father, brother, grandfather; or other available male member from the father's side. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Musa (RA) reportedly said: "**The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said, 'There is no marriage without a guardian**.'" Furthermore, in addition to Muslim females, a Muslim man is also permitted to marry chaste women from among the Jews and Christians (People of the Book). This fact is evident from Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:5) of the Quran

which reads: **"This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them. (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), revealed before your time,- when ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues if any one rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good)."**

On the contrary, a Muslim woman in Islam is only permitted to marry a Muslim man. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:221) of the Quran which reads: **"Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe. A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe. A man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever, even though he allures you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the Fire. But Allah beckons by His Grace to the Garden (of bliss) and forgiveness and makes His Signs clear to mankind; That they may celebrate His praise."** It is also important to note that the reason why a Muslim man can marry a Jew or Christian woman is because, in Islam, Christianity, and

Judaism, the man is acknowledged as the authoritative figure in the marriage. The evidence from the Quran proving that the husband has more authority than his wife is found in Surah al-Nisa (4:34) which reads: "**Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).**" Likewise, the evidence from the Bible which proves that the husband has more authority than his wife is found in Ephesians 5:22-23 which reads: "**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife.....**" Lastly, in Bershit 3:16 (Genesis 3:16) it says: "**.... and you (the wife) shall be under your husband's power, and he shall have dominion over you.**" Thus, if a Muslim marries a Jew or Christian, he cannot force her to abandon her religious beliefs because the Quran clearly speaks against this in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256) when it says: "**Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from Error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most**

trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things." However, Devarim 7:3 of the Torah (Deuteronomy 7:3) clearly says: **"Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons;**" and the Bible in 2 Corinthians 6:14 says: **"Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?**" Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the Bible does not specifically prohibit a Christian from marrying a non-Christian; however, the term "unequally yoked" pertains to having different beliefs regarding the worship of God. For example, a Muslim believes that God is "ahad;" totally unique and unlike any of his creation; in addition to rejecting the concept of original sin. However, Christians believe that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) died for the sins of mankind, and some even believe that he is actually God in the flesh. Therefore, for a Muslim woman to be equally yoked with a Christian man, she would have to renounce her Islamic beliefs which maintain that every person is accountable for their own sins and that Jesus (P.B.U.H.) was not crucified, which is evident from Surah Al-Nisa (4:157 - 158) of the Quran which reads: **"That they said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of Allah;' but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with**

no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not. Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise." Lastly, and most importantly, Luke 19:27 of the Bible says: "**But those my enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring here, and slay them before me.**" This verse is extremely dangerous; because, a Christian husband could be influenced to harm or even kill his wife if he so how believed that she was not paying proper respect to Jesus (P.B.U.H.); i.e., denying his crucifixion or acknowledging him as God on Earth.

It is also important to note that in unfortunate circumstances such as those which plague many Muslims living in the West, wherein the female one desires to wed is actually a convert (revert to Islam), with none of her male relatives being a Muslim; in addition to the fact that there is no Islamic community established in their city; thus, the Muslim in this predicament will have to modify his approach. Ideally, one should look online to locate the nearest Islamic community and contact the resident Imam to see if a Muslima (female Muslim) from his community, particularly his wife, sister, or daughter, is willing to approach the sister whom you have a desire to marry on your behalf.

The reason why the Imam himself will not approach the sister you desire to marry is because since he is not affiliated with her wale and she is not a member of his community, it is also unlawful for him to approach her. Next, the wife, sister, etc. of the Imam will approach the woman of interest to first inquire if she is currently married or even interested in getting married. If she is eligible and willing to pursue marriage, then the wife, sister, etc. of the Imam will inform her that you are the interested party. The wife, sister, etc. of the Imam will then inform him that both parties are interested and he can arrange it so that the two of you can have chaperoned meetings to see each other, converse, and discuss the terms of the marital contract and dowry; because at this point, both parties will be classified as engaged, and no other suitor may present his proposal for marriage.

If on the other hand it is a female who is interested in getting married, she should inform her parents. Her parents should then inquire as to whom she is interested in marrying. If there is no one in particular, her parents should proceed by selecting a qualified candidate on her behalf. If she is satisfied with her parents choice, her father will approach the Muslim brother and present him with the offer of marriage to his daughter. If the Muslim brother accepts the proposal, then they

will discuss the dowry and terms of the marriage contract, and both parties will be classified as engaged, and no other suitor will be permitted to present his proposal for marriage.

If by chance, the female desiring to get married is denied the opportunity by her wale despite the fact that the suitor is a righteous Muslim or if she is a convert to Islam with no Muslim wale, then she should contact the resident Imam who will in turn serve as her wale and will inform the available Muslim men of his community whom do not already have four wives to contact him if they are interested in getting married. The Imam will then inform the female of the candidate which he feels is ideal. If she is satisfied with his choice, then the two parties will proceed with the necessary arrangements. In the event that she is not satisfied with the Imam's choice as the ideal candidate, she will then select from the other candidates selected by the Imam. Moreover, in instances wherein there is no Islamic community in the Muslim female's city, then the female in question should pursue other options such as looking up the nearest masjid online and contacting the resident Imam of that community. He should then have his wife, sister, daughter, or other respected female from his community contact the sister to inform her about her rights beforehand and then inform her about possible candidates. However, under no circumstance should the

female in question meet alone with the Imam or any of the possible Muslim candidates. The female in question should meet in the company of the Imam and his wife along with the ideal candidate in order to see each other, converse, and discuss the terms of the marriage and dowry.

It is also important to note that with regard to seeing each other, under no circumstances should the female expose her awrah to her male suitor prior to marriage. He is not permitted to look at her legs, stomach, hair, etc. Furthermore, a suitor can determine whether the female has a body size to his liking simply by looking at her form in her clothing. For example, a suitor can tell by basically looking at a female who is fully clothed whether she is full figured or petite. She does not have to expose herself in order for him to make this determination. A suitor is however, permitted to see her face and hands. Likewise, the female has the right to look at her male suitor provided his awrah is fully covered. Lastly, any abnormalities concealed by the awrah of either the future bride or groom such as diseases, mental illness, dysfunctions such as impotence or hysterectomy, etc., must be revealed prior to marriage; because, these factors might be influential enough to sway the decision of either party from proceeding with the finalization of the actual marriage contract.

One of the customs which predated Islam that was prevalent among the Arabs which Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) actually allowed his Ummah (community of Muslims) to maintain was the practice of engagement wherein the family of one individual would visit the house of another and present the offer of marriage (proposal) on behalf of their son, daughter, niece, nephew, brother, sister, etc. This fact is evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: **"When someone with whose religion and character you are satisfied, asks to marry your daughter, agree to his request. If you do not do so, there will be corruption and great evil on Earth."** Furthermore, one may even make a subtle proposal to a recently widowed or divorced woman in her iddah period (three menstrual periods for divorced female and four months and ten days for a widow), by saying something like, "It would make a man very happy to have you as his wife after your are eligible for marriage." This fact is evident from Surah Baqarah (2:235) of the Quran which reads: **"You commit no sin by announcing your proposal to the women (make it known to her), or keeping it secret (not making your intention known to her). Allah knows that you desire them. But do not make a secret contract with them except in terms honorable, nor resolve on the tie of marriage till the term prescribed is fulfilled. And know that Allah Knows what is in your hearts, and take heed of Him; and**

know that Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing." Furthermore, one should not propose to a female while knowing full well that another has publicly stressed his desire to marry her. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn 'Umar reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) decreed that one should not try to cancel a bargain already agreed upon between some other persons (by offering a bigger price). And a man should not ask for the hand of a girl who is already engaged to his Muslim brother, unless the first suitor gives her up, or allows him to ask for her hand**."

Contrary to the cultural norms of her time, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA) desired to marry Mohammed (P.B.U.H.), so she disclosed her intention to her friend Nafisa, the daughter of Maniya, who immediately visited Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) to inform him of Khadijah's (RA) desire to marry him. He agreed and requested his uncles to go to Khadijah's (RA) uncle, who was her wale, to present the proposal on his behalf. Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H.) uncle, Hamzah, accompanied him to formally ask Khadijah's (RA) uncle for her hand in marriage, and his uncle, Abu Talib made the public announcement of the engagement.

It is also important to note that in Islam, the acceptance of a marriage proposal from a virgin is her silence, whereas, the acceptance of a woman who is not a virgin such as one who

was previously married is her verbal statement of acceptance to her wale. The evidence for the above rulings is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'A matron should not be given in marriage except after consulting her; and a virgin should not be given in marriage except after her permission.' The people asked, 'O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! How can we know her permission?' He (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Her silence (indicates her permission).'**"

It is also worth mentioning that a revert to Islam who is not an actual virgin but has not engaged in premarital sex after converting has the same honor as a virgin. This fact is evident from surah Al-Anfal (8:38) of the Quran which reads: "**Say to the Unbelievers, if (now) they desist (from Unbelief), their past would be forgiven them....**" Also, the hadith of Ahmad narrated by Amr ibn al-'Aas reports: "**When Allah put the love of Islam into my heart, I came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to pledge my allegiance to him. He stretched out his hand towards me, but I said, 'I will not pledge allegiance to you, O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), until you forgive me my previous sins.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said to me, 'O 'Amr, do you not know that Islam wipes out whatever sins came before it.'**" Nevertheless, the female in question should give a verbal statement of acceptance to her wale; because, if she remains

silent as in the case of a true virgin whose hymen is fully intact due to never having sexual intercourse, problems might arise between her and her husband if he realizes while consummating the marriage that she is not truly a virgin. The same applies for women who have been raped or molested. Their honor remains intact and they are classified as chaste like actual virgins although actual penetration may have occurred. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Nur (24:33) of the Quran which reads: "**.... And do not, in order to gain some of the fleeting pleasures of this worldly life, coerce your slave women into whoredom if they are desirous of marriage, and if anyone should coerce them, then, verily, after they have been compelled (to submit in their helplessness), Allah is Oft-Forgiving, a dispenser of grace (to them)**." Furthermore, the hadith of Tirmidhi that was narrated by Wa'il ibn Hujr who reportedly said: "**There was an incident wherein a woman was raped. Later, when some people came by, she identified and accused the man of raping her. They seized him and brought him to Allah's messenger (P.B.U.H.) who then said to the woman, 'Go away, for Allah has forgiven you,' but of the man who had raped her, he said, 'stone him to death.'**" Lastly, it is also worth mentioning that a person is not permitted to inquire about specific details from a person's sexual past. A male suitor automatically knows if the female he desires to marry is a virgin (Bikr) due to her silence

when accepting the proposal presented to her wale. However, if she verbally says "yes" while the suitor knows full well that she was never married, he does have the right to inquire about her chastity; i.e., specific details. Rather her wale should verifying whether she is knowledgeable about the proper procedure for a virgin to follow when accepting the proposal of her suitor. However, if she is aware of the proper procedure, she should save both of them further embarrassment by saying something to the effect of, "If you are seeking a TRUE VIRGIN (Bikr), them I am not such a female." The suitor should take this term "TRUE VIRGIN" to mean that the females honor is intact but there are mitigating circumstances surrounding the matter which has classified her as not a true virgin (thayib).

In the event that an engaged couple decides not to proceed with the actual marriage, it is permissible for them to simply make duah for each other by asking Allah to reward them with better than what they lost and go their separate ways. However, even if and after a man and woman have agreed to marry, it is important to reiterate that they are still not permitted to freely interact with each other in an unsupervised manner. This fact is evident from the hadith of Ahmad wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, **"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not have a private audience with a woman**

without her mahram." Furthermore, even if chaperoned by the female's wale, the couple is prohibited from engaging in acts such as shaking hands, unnecessary gazing at one another, being alone together, etc.; because, the actual marriage has not been officially finalized in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

It is also worth mentioning that according to Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen (al-Fataawa al-Jaami'ah li'l-Mar'ah al-Muslimah): "The engagement ring is a kind of ring, and there is nothing wrong with rings in principle, unless it is accompanied by some belief or practice such as when an engaged man and woman writes their name on rings and then exchanges them believing that this ritual will create a stronger bond between them. In this case, using a ring is strictly haram; because it is an attachment to something for which is nonsensical and has no basis in Islam. Furthermore, it is not permissible for a male suitor to place an engagement ring on his fiancée's hand; because, she is not his wife (lawful to be touched by him) until after the marriage contract has been finalized."

Aqd al-nikah (The marriage contract in Islam)

Prior to the establishment of the marriage contract a couple is only classified as engaged; meaning, that it is impermissible for any other suitor to present the female in

question with a proposal for marriage. however, it is not until after the actual marriage contract is completed that the engaged suitor can approach the engaged female in any manner he desires. As an engaged party, the female is still considered a stranger; as such, all the prohibitions regarding interaction which apply to any other female also applies to the engaged female. Furthermore, even if one of the engaged parties were to die, the other would not be permitted to inherit from the deceased party. It is not until the actual marriage contract is completed that the rights and status of an actual husband and wife comes into effect.

The evidence for the marriage contract in Islam is the hadith of Bukhari that was narrated by 'Ursa who reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) wrote the (marriage contract) with Aisha while she was six years old and consummated his marriage with her while she was nine years old and she remained with him for nine years (i.e. till his death)**." Furthermore, based on the above mentioned hadith, it is important to reiterate that even though a couple is married, puberty must take place either resulting from menstruation, the presence of sexual discharge (maniyy/mathi), pubic hair, or age fifteen before the actual marriage can be consummated. This is why the above mentioned hadith specifically mentions that although the Prophet

(P.B.U.H.) married Aisha (RA) when she was six years old, he did not consummate the marriage with her until she was age nine; i.e., after getting her menses. It is also worth mentioning that Aisha (RA) was the only true virgin (Bikr) that the Prophet married; which was the result of an instruction in a prophetic dream. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha (RA) narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'I saw shown you twice in a dream. A man was carrying you in a silk cloth and said, 'This is your wife.' He uncovered it and it was you. I said, 'If this is from Allah He will bring it about.**'" Furthermore, as a general rule, a true virgin man should preferably marry another true virgin as their first wife for basic compatibility reasons; but it is not a requirement; because neither was the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) a virgin when he married Aisha (RA) nor was Khadijah (RA) a true virgin (Bikr) when she married the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who was a virgin man that was twenty-five years younger than her.

The evidence for the permissibility to marry either a virgin or one who is classified as thayib due to being windowed or divorced is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir Ibn Abdullah reportedly said: "**Once (when he was approximately seventeen years old), while on an expedition with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when they were close to the city of Medina, he**

(Jabir) sped on his mount. The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) asked him why he was in such a hurry to return home. Jabir replied, 'I am recently married!' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) asked, 'to an older lady or a younger one?' (the Arabic could also read: 'to a widow or a virgin?'), to which he replied, 'a widow.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'but why didn't you marry a younger girl, so that you could play with her, and she could play with you, and you could make her laugh, and she could make you laugh?' He (Jabir) said, 'O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)! My father died a martyr at the Battle of Uhud, leaving behind daughters, so I did not wish to marry a young girl like them (my sisters), but rather an older one who could take care of them and look after them.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) replied, 'you have made the correct choice...."

The ideal time of the year to get married

The prophetic tradition maintains that it is preferred for one to get married during the Islamic month of Shawwal, and there is also merit in taking one's bride in the house during this particular month. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Aisha (RA) reportedly said: **"Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) contracted marriage with me in Shawwal and took me to his house as a bride during Shawwal; and who among the wives of Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) was dearer to him than**

I. Thus, I liked that the women (of her family) should enter the houses as brides during the month of Shawwal."

Conditions of a marriage contract:

I. Bride and groom

A marriage contract must include two parties namely the bride and groom. However, unlike the bride, the groom does not require representation from a wale (A "Muslim" male guardian from the father's side such as the father, brother, grandfather, uncle, etc.). The only possible exception for the groom would be if he was mentally ill. Furthermore, if the bride does not have a Muslim wale, then the Judge in an Islamic society or if living in a non-Islamic society, then either the Shaykh of her community or the Shaykh/Imam from the closest masjid becomes her wale. The wale of the bride can also nominate another male to assume the responsibilities of this role even if he is not related to the bride. What makes the transfer of waleship valid is the permission of the bride's original wale. For example, a wale from Egypt who has a daughter living in Canada can appoint a friend of his to be his daughter's wale if he cannot afford to travel to another country in order to oversee the actual marriage contract. All that is required is for him to say I agree to give my daughter in marriage and I appoint so-and-so to act as her wale. Furthermore, the bride and groom are not even

required to reside in the same country during the drawing up of the marriage contract. They can actually nominate representatives living in a third country to act on their behalf with regard to the drawing up of the marriage contract.

Location of the Nikah

The actual nikah does not have to be conducted in a specific place. The nikah can either be held at the local masjid, at home, in someone's backyard, in one's basement, at a park, in a restaurant, at a community center, or at any other location provided that it complies with the Islamic guidelines of purity; i.e., no indecency, obscenities, intoxicants, etc. However, it is the sunnah to perform the nikah in the masjid. The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Aisha (RA) narrated: "The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Publicize these marriages, conduct them in mosques, and beat the duff (tambourines) to announce them.'" Furthermore, it is important to remember that extravagance and waste are extremely disliked in Islam. This fact is evident from Surah Al-An'am (6:141) of the Quran which reads: "**.....But waste not by excess: for Allah loves not the wasters**."

II. Two adult and sane witnesses:

In an Islamic marriage contract the two witnesses are generally male Muslims. However, non-Muslim males are

acceptable. Furthermore, the Hanafi Madhab also permits one man and two women, whenever a second male is unavailable. It is also important to note that the two witnesses do not have to be in attendance. They only need to be informed that they have been selected as witnesses to the marriage between so-and-so, and informed about the terms of the marriage contract. The marriage contract of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA) was witnessed by at least two persons from among the Bani Hashim and the heads of Mudar. This fact is also evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Abu Musa narrated that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said **"There is no marriage except with a Wale and two witnesses."** Furthermore, even if the witnesses are later discovered to be among those classified as false witnesses, their testimony will still serve as valid evidence proving that the couple were in fact married. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha reportedly said: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'It is essential to have the consent of a virgin (for the marriage).' I said, 'A virgin feels shy.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.); said, 'Her silence means her consent.' Some people said, 'If a man falls in love with an orphan slave girl or a virgin and she refuses (him) and then he makes a trick by bringing two false witnesses to testify that he has married her, and then she attains the age of puberty and agrees to marry him and the judge**

accepts the false witness and the husband knows that the witnesses were false ones, he may consummate his marriage.'"

However, if the husband or wife were fully aware that the witnesses were false prior to marriage, then both of them will be sinful. However, there is no blame on any innocent party in this matter. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith of Bukhari wherein Umm Salama (RA) narrated: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) heard some people quarreling at the door of his dwelling, so he (P.B.U.H.) went out to them and said, 'I am only a human being, and litigants with cases of dispute come to me, and someone of you may happen to be more eloquent (in presenting his case) than the other, whereby I may consider that he is truthful and pass a judgment in his favor. If ever I pass a judgment in favor of somebody whereby he takes a Muslim's right unjustly, then whatever he takes is nothing but a piece of Fire, and it is up to him to take it or leave it (can be honest and not proceed or proceed with what benefits him and later be punished by Allah's Hellfire)**.'"

- In an unforeseen situation such as being stranded on a deserted Island, a man and woman can marry themselves with Allah and his Angels serving as witnesses to the union; because, deeds are based on their intentions, which in this instance is to comply with the lawful practice of marriage

to the best of one's means versus engaging in zina (lewd sexual acts such as fornication and adultery).

III. Terms of the marriage contract/offer and acceptance:

The terms of the marriage should be discussed; such as for a woman to stipulate that she desires to attend college to obtain a degree in order to obtain a particular profession. This is an important part of the marriage process because some Muslim husbands do not desire that their wife should work for a living. Likewise, a Muslim husband should stipulate whether he desires to marry additional wives; because, some women are extremely jealous and desire to be their husband's only wife.

It is also important to note that no wife can prevent her husband from acquiring additional wives, nor does he have to ask for her permission; because, Allah has granted the Muslim husband the right to acquire up to four wives if her can provide for them and treat them justly. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Nisa (4:3 and 4:129) of the Quran which reads: **"If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, Marry women of your choice, Two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice."** Also, **"Ye are never able to be fair and just as between women (wives), even if**

it is your ardent desire: But turn not away (from a wife) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, and practice self-restraint, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." What is more, a newly engaged female cannot stipulate that her suitor divorce his current wife in order to obtain her hand in marriage. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "**It is not lawful for a woman (at the time of wedding) to ask for the divorce of her sister (i.e. the other wife of her would-be husband) in order to have everything for herself, for she will take only what has been written for her.**" Lastly, in the Muwatta of Imam Malik, it is related: "**Malik said, 'The custom among us is that when a man marries a woman, and he makes a condition in the marriage contract that he will not marry after her or take a concubine, it means nothing unless there is an oath of divorce or setting-free attached to it. Then it is obliged and required of him.**" In summary, since divorce is in the hands of the husband, he must stipulate in the marriage contract that his wife will be granted the option to divorce him if he reneges.

IV. Pre Nikah speech or Khutba Nikah (marriage sermon)

It is highly encouraged that a brief speech or Khutba (sermon) be recited before the actual Nikah formula is enunciated.

Sermon in Arabic:

إِنَّ الحَمدَ لله ، نَستَعِينُهُ وَنَستَغفِرُهُ ، وَنَعُوذُ بِهِ مِن شُرُورِ أنفُسِنَا ، مَن يَهدِهُ اللهُ فَلا مُضِلَّ لَهُ ، وَمَن يُضلِل فَلا هَادِيَ لَه ، وَأشهَدُ أن لا إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللهُ وَأَشهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبدُهُ وَرَسُولُه .

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالاً كَثِيراً وَنِسَاء وَاتَّقُواْ اللهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءلُونَ بِهِ وَالأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيباً

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ اتَّقُواْ اللهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلاَ تَمُوتُنَّ إِلاَّ وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُواَ اللهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلاً سَدِيداً يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَمَن يُطِعْ اللهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزاً عَظِيماً

Person performing the Nikah Khutba

The nikah khutba is to be performed by the Imam or a knowledgeable person who is scheduled to conduct the marriage. The sermon includes the three verses of Taqwa, and a hadith or two about marriage exhorting the couple and those present to fear Allah and attain Taqwa as stipulated by Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, and Ahmad. Furthermore, the Khutba should be structured so that Allah is praised for His Wisdom in regulating the lawful process of marriage and procreation.

The evidence for the marriage sermon is the historical account of the marriage between the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA) from the narration of Tabari wherin he reported the following in Tareekh At-Tabari: "Abu Talib, the uncle of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) made a speech on his behalf saying, '**Praise be to Allah, Who has made us from the progeny of Abraham (P.B.U.H.) and the offspring of Ishmael, ... Mohammed Ibn Abdullah, my nephew, is one that none of the youth of Quraysh is comparable to, unless he is preferred to him by his piety, virtue, determination, reason, discernment, and nobility. Though he is of little money, money is merely a transient shadow and a loan that shall be given back. He has a wish towards Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (RA), and she has like that. Whatever dowry you would like I shall pay ...**'"

Reciting the Khutba Nikah (marriage sermon)

According to a hadith from Tirmidhi that was narrated by Ibn Masud, "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) taught the following for Khutba Nikah: 'Innal Hamda lillahi, nastaeenuhu wa nastaghfirhu, wa naoozu billahi min shorrori anfusina. Man yahdihi Allahu fala mudhilla lahu wa mayn yudhlil fa la hadia lah. Wa ash hadu al la ilaha il lal lah wa ash hadu an na Muhammadan abduhu wa rasooluhu**.'"

شُرُورِ مِن بِهِ وَنَعُوذُ ، وَنَسْتَغفِرُهُ نَسْتَعِينُهُ ، لِلَّهِ الحَمدَ إِنَّ

هَادِيَ فَلا يُضلِل وَمَن ، لَهُ مُضِلَّ فَلا اللَّهُ يَهدِهِ مَن ، أَنفُسِنَا

وَرَسُولُه عَبدُهُ مُحَمَّدًا أَنَّ وَأَشهَدُ اللَّهُ إِلا إِلَهَ لا أَن وَأَشهَدُ ، لَه

This translates into English as: "Praise be to Allah, we seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own souls and from our bad deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides will never be led astray, and whomsoever Allah leaves astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is His slave and Messenger."

After reciting this initial statement, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) would recite the following verses from the Quran; namely, Surahs Al-Nisa 4:1, Al-Imran 3:102, and Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71. However, the following invocation against Satan should be recited before commencing with the recitation of the Quran: "A'uzu billahi minashaitanir rajim [I seek refuge in Allah from the rejected and accursed Satan.] Then say Bismillah [In the name of Allah] Al-rahman [The most Gracious] Al-Raheem [The most merciful]."

Surah Al-Nisa 4:1, "O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for Allah ever watches over you."

وَخَلَقَ وَاحِدَةٍ نَّفْسٍ مِّن خَلَقَكُم الَّذِي رَبَّكُمُ اتَّقُواْ النَّاسُ أَيُّهَا يَا

الَّذِي اللّهَ وَاتَّقُواْ وَنِسَاء يراًكَثِ رِجَالاً مِنْهُمَا وَبَثَّ زَوْجَهَا مِنْهَا

رَقِيباً عَلَيْكُمْ كَانَ اللّهَ إِنَّ وَالأَرْحَامَ بِهِ تَسَاءلُونَ

Surah Al-Nisa 4:1 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha alnnasuittaqoo rabbakumu

allathee khalaqakum min nafsin wahidatinwakhalaqa minha zawjaha wabaththa minhumarijalan katheeran wanisaan waittaqoo Allahaallathee tasaaloona bihi waal-arhamainna Allaha kana AAalaykum raqeeban"

Surah Al-Imran 3:102, "O you who Believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and see that you do die not except in the state of submission to Allah."

Surah Al-Imran 3:102 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha allatheena amanooittaqoo Allaha haqqa tuqatihi walatamootunna illa waantum muslimoona"

Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71, "O you who Believe! Fear Allah and say the right thing. Allah will make your conduct (affairs) whole and sound and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained to a great success."

قَوْلاً وَقُولُوا اللَّهَ اتَّقُوا آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ أَيُّهَا يَا

ذُنُوبَكُمْ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ لَكُمْ يُصْلِحْ سَدِيداً

عَظِيماً فَوْزاً فَازَ فَقَدْ وَرَسُولَهُ اللَّهَ يُطِعْ وَمَن

Surah Al-Ahzab 33:70 - 71 Arabic: "Ya ayyuha allatheena amanooittaqoo Allaha waqooloo qawlan sadeedan; Yuslih lakum aAAmalakumwayaghfir lakum thunoobakum waman yutiAAi Allahawarasoolahu faqad faza fawzan AAatheeman"

According to Abdul Malik Mujahid, there are several principles, which these verses present; namely, by asking for Taqwa, which can basically be translated as, piety acquired from constantly being mindful of Allah and being fearful that one can lose Allah's love and mercy whenever they do not live and enjoin a lifestyle that complies with the commandments set forth by Allah. Furthermore, Taqwa is being emphasized four times in these Quranic verses to clearly stipulate the key principle in which a sound and stable marriage/family life is to be

established upon. This is the primary reason why anytime the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) performed a marriage sermon, he considered it imperative to encourage those believers pursuing marriage to fear Allah and to avoid earning His displeasure. Likewise, if a couple desires to be successful in their marriage, they will constantly be mindful of Allah and will elect to stay away from what has been prohibited and enjoin only what has been recommended.

Abdul Malik Mujahid also maintains that Taqwa (piety) is not just reflected in worship and Halal (permissible) types of marriage. It also requires clear communication between the spouses. This is the reason why immediately after encouraging the believers to acquire Taqwa, Allah instructs them to adopt proper speech by saying only what is right and good. Furthermore, since it is also acknowledged that all humans are derived from Prophet Adam (P.B.U.H.) and his wife (RA), we are therefore considered one community. Likewise, by mentioning the process of creation, Allah is emphasizing an analogy wherein the institution of marriage actually plays a similar role in the existence of mankind; thus, indicating that through marriage, mankind is fulfilling its role in the sacred process of creation which Allah has established; because, Allah does not recognize any type marriage that is not comprised of a man and a woman.

Recite the following hadith from the collection of Bukhari wherein Anas (RA) reported: "**.... The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'By Allah! Among all of you I am the most God-fearing, and among you all, I am the best suited to save myself from the wrath of Allah, yet my state is that I observe prayer and sleep too. I observe fast and suspend observing them; I marry woman also. And he who turns away from my Sunnah has no relation with me.'**" Thereafter, the ceremony usually draws to a close with the Muslim conducting the actual marriage ceremony making a sincere prayer (duaha) for the bride and groom, their families, the guests, and the entire Muslim community as a whole. Furthermore, the closing remarks should reiterate that marriage is one-half of one's religious duty to Allah; and as such, engaging in it is regarded as an act of worship. This fact is evident from the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Anas ibn Malik (RA) reportedly said: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When a man marries he has fulfilled half of the deen; so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.'**"

After performing the Nikah Khutba

After those whom have assembled for the sermon of nikah have been addressed by the Muslim officiating the marriage, the actual ceremony of nikah should begin. Furthermore, in Islamic societies, a state appointed judge (Qadi) keeps the record of

the marriage contract. The documents of the marriage contract is also filed with the masjid and local government for public record. It is also important to note that some masajid/Imams have the legal capacity to solemnize a marriage which is then recognized by the state, county or local council, which is extremely advantageous in that it prevents a couple from having to re-perform their marriage in a state mandated civil ceremony.

V. The Nikah Ceremony:

The Imam or person performing the actual marriage ceremony will proceed by asking the groom or his representative (1) if he gives consent to the bride's (taking her complete name) marriage (2) to the groom (again taking the complete name) (3) for the stipulated amount of marriage payment (4) in the presence of the two witnesses. If the representative consents then the imam turns to the groom and ask him if he accepts the bride (taking her name) in his marriage for the stipulated amount of marriage payment. The groom has to reply in complete terms such as, "I accept her in my marriage" or " I have accepted her in my marriage" or "I do marry her." It is preferable that he say this and not just "I do" or "I accept."

All the scholars agree that the "offer from the bride's wale and acceptance from the groom" (Al-Ijaab wa al-qubul) is among the arkan (requirements) of a marriage. If both parties

are willing to comply with the terms of the contract, they will proceed by having the Wale of the bride say something to the effect of, "I present the daughter of so-and-so to you as your bride for specified dowry," or "I on behalf of so-and-so present the daughter of so-and-so to you as your bride for said dowry," and the groom will say, "I, the son of so-and-so accept the hand of the bride as my wife in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for the specified dowry; or a representative of the groom will say, "I, on behalf of the groom, the son of so-and-so, accept the hand of the bride as his wife in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for the specified dowry requested by the bride. This practice is evident from the sunnah; because, both Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah (RA) finalized their marriage by exchanging two terms of acceptance; such as I, Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) take you Khadijah (RA) as my wife, and I Khadijah (RA) take you Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) as my husband.

Congratulate the groom on his marriage to his bride:

Next, the Imam or person performing the marriage ceremony will congratulate the groom by reciting the following duah as detailed in the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

الخَيْرِ فِي بَيْنَكُمَا وَجمَعَ عَلَيْكَ وَبَارَكَ لَكَ اللّٰهُ بَارَكَ

"Barak Allahu laka wa baraka alayka wa jama'a baynakuma

bikhayr." This translates into English as: "May Allah bless you and have His blessing descend upon you and unite you in goodness." The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Abu Hurayrah (RA) who reportedly said: "**When a man contracted a marriage with his bride, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would say to him, 'May Allah bless you and bless it for you and may He join you with goodness**!'"

At this point, the actual marriage is established. Therefore, the groom should then present the bride with her requested wedding gift (mahr/dowry) as a sign of appreciation for blessing him with the honor of becoming his wife. It is also important to note that regarding the dowry of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and Khadijah (RA), the historical reports maintain that the actual dower was fixed at twelve and one - half okks of gold, which is equivalent to the price twenty camels. There are additional historical reports which declare that the dowry was fixed at 500 dirhams which was equivalent to the price of twenty camels; likewise, that Abu Talib paid the dowry on his behalf; and that Khadijah (RA) actually gave the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) 4,000 dinars as a gift and urged him to pay it to her uncle as the dowry. Furthermore, although the actual dowry is not a requirement for the wedding contract to be valid, it is advantageous to specify what the actual dowry will be and the

terms surrounding its delivery to the bride, in the actual contract in order to avoid future confusion from ensuing. The evidence proving that the actual marriage has been established prior to the bride receiving a dowry is Surah Al-Nisa (2:236) of the Quran which reads: **"There is no blame on you if ye divorce women before consummation or the fixation of their dower; but bestow on them (A suitable gift); the wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means. A gift of a reasonable amount is due from those who wish to do the right thing."**

VI. Mahr/Dowry (wedding gift to the bride) is to be paid either immediately (muajjal) or deferred (muakhkhar), or a combination of both:

Since the actual dowry does not have to be paid in full at the time of the marriage, if the female agrees to these terms, it is therefore not a requirement to make the marriage contract valid. However, whatever the amount or particular items that the bride requested, it must be paid to her, even if it comes out of the estate of the groom after his death. It is also important to note that the dowry is entitled solely to the bride. After Khadijah's wale, her uncle, agreed to accept the proposal of Mohammed on her behalf, Khadijah then agreed to a dowry of twenty she-camels. However, even though the offer of a dowry

must be presented to a bride, she is permitted to forfeit receiving the entire amount or part of it. The evidence for providing one's wife with a marriage gift is Surah Al-Nisa of the Quran (4:4) which reads: **"And give the women (on marriage) their dower as a free gift; but if they, of their own good pleasure, remit any part of it to you, Take it and enjoy it with right good cheer."** Furthermore, as regards the value of the actual dowry, Islam has not set a minimum or maximum requirement or even specified what it must be, as long as the female is willing to accept it. This fact is also evident from Surah Al-Nisa of the Quran (4:20) which reads: **"...even if ye had given the latter a whole treasure for dower..."** Furthermore, for those who possess no actual wealth but are willing to ignore this fact in order to get married can actually teach a verse or a single word of the Quran as a dowry. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Sahl bin Sad As-Sa'idi reportedly said: **"A woman came to Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and said, 'O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! I have come to give you myself in marriage (without Mahr).' Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) looked at her. He looked at her carefully and fixed his glance on her and then lowered his head. When the lady saw that he did not say anything, she sat down. A man from his companions got up and said, 'O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! If you are not in need of her, then marry her to me.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Have**

you got anything to offer?' The man said, 'No, by Allah, O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)!' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said (to him), 'Go to your family and see if you have something.' The man went and returned, saying, 'No, by Allah, I have not found anything.' Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, '(Go again) and look for something, even if it is an iron ring.' He went again and returned, saying, 'No, by Allah, O Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.)! I could not find even an iron ring, but this is my Izar (waist sheet).' He had no rida. He added, 'I will give half of it to her." Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'What will she do with your Izar? If you wear it, she will be naked, and if she wears it, you will be naked.' So that man sat down for a long while and then got up (to depart). When Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) saw him going, he ordered that he be called back. When he came, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'How much of the Quran do you know?' He said, 'I know such Sura and such Sura,' counting them. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Do you know them by heart?' He replied, 'Yes.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Go, I marry her to you for that much of the Quran which you have.'"

- The bride is not obliged to give the groom anything at the time of the wedding, as is done in some cultures; because, the husband is being honored by the hand of the wife in marriage.

Make duah for the couple and those in attendance:

As recommended by Abdul Malik Mujahid, the Muslim official who conducted the actual marriage ceremony should recite duahs on behalf of the couple and the attendees; something to the effect of, "May Allah bless your marriage with the beauty of the marriage of Ayesha and her husband, may Allah be pleased with her. May Allah guide you both on the steps of Taqwa and may He provide the two of you with good communication in your relationship. May Allah bless the earth with your progeny who we pray will be better than us toward their Creator and His Creation. May Allah help us all reaffirm our commitments to each other. May Allah give Barakah (blessings) to the families of the bride and groom. May Allah bring them closer. May Allah make you a model family that will invite humanity to follow the guidance of its Creator."

VII. Provide entertainment at the wedding

In accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) those in attendance of the wedding should be provided with halal entertainment that does not promote unlawful mixing of the sexes and the use of prohibited musical instruments. The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha narrated that she prepared a lady for a man from the Ansar as his bride and the Prophet said, **"O 'Aisha! Haven't you got any amusement**

(during the marriage ceremony) as the Ansar like amusement?"

Nevertheless, Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (RA) reportedly said: "But the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made allowances for certain types of musical instruments at weddings and the like, and he made allowances for women to play the daff (duff) at weddings and on other joyful occasions. But the men at his time did not play the daff or clap with their hands." Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid further reports that it was also narrated in al-Saheeh that he said: "Clapping is for women and tasbeeh (saying Subhaan Allah) is for men." And he cursed women who imitate men and men who imitate women. Because singing and playing the daff are things that women do, the Salaf used to call any man who did that a mukhannath (effeminate man), and they used to call male singers effeminate – and how many of them there are nowadays! It is well known that the Salaf said this.

Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid also reported, "In a similar vein is the hadith of Ayesha (RA), when her father, Abu Bakr (RA) entered upon her at the time of Eid, and there were two young girls with her who were singing the verses that the Ansaar had said on the day of Bu'aath – and any sensible person will know what people say about war. Abu Bakr (RA) then said: "Musical instruments of the Shaytan in the house of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)!" The Messenger of Allah

(P.B.U.H.) had turned away from them and was facing the wall – hence some scholars said that Abu Bakr (RA) would not tell anybody off in front of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), but he thought that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was not paying attention to what was happening. And Allah knows best. He (the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "**Leave them alone, O Abu Bakr, for every nation has its Eid, and this is our Eid, the people of Islam**." This hadith shows that it was not the habit of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions (RA) to gather to listen to singing, hence Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq (RA) called it "The musical instruments of the Shaytan." And the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) approved of this appellation and did not deny it when he said, "**Leave them alone, for every nation has its Eid and this is our Eid**." This indicates that the reason why this was permitted was because it was the time of Eid, and the prohibition remained in effect at times other than Eid, apart from the exceptions made for weddings in other ahaadeeth. Shaykh al-Albaani explained this in his valuable book Tahreem Aalaat al-Tarab (the Prohibition of Musical Instruments). The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) approved of young girls singing at Eid, as stated in the hadith: "**So that the mushrikeen will know that in our religion there is room for relaxation**." There is no indication in the hadith about the two young girls that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was listening to them. The commands and prohibitions have to do with listening,

not merely hearing, just as in the case of seeing; the rules have to do with intentionally looking and not what happens by accident. So it is clear that this is for women only. Imam Abu ‘Ubayd (RA) defined the daff as, "that which is played by women.'"

Lastly, according to Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid, "If Islam differentiates between two things, such as the duff and the tablah (another kind of drum), then they are definitely not the same and there is a difference between them which dictates that they should come under different rulings. The difference between the duff and the tablah is that the sound of the duff is less stirring and it has less of an effect on the soul than the tablah. The hollow space inside of the tablah causes vibration and a more stirring sound, which does not happen with the duff, because it has no hollow space inside, and its sound is also less powerful than that of the tablah. For this reason the Islamic shariah forbids the kind of duff that has jangling pieces of metal around it (i.e., tambourine), because the jangling pieces make more of a stirring sound than the duff that does not have them. The daff is the least stirring of all musical instruments; hence, the reason why the shariah has permitted it in certain instances, such as announcing a wedding and making it well known among the people."

VIII. Consummating the marriage as husband and wife

After the terms of the marriage contract has been fulfilled, the specifics of the dowry agreed upon, and the actual nikah ceremony has been performed, the bride and broom at this point are now lawfully regarded as husband and wife in Islam. The couple is now permitted to expose their awrah to one another, inherit as a lawful heir according to the guidelines established by Allah, and enter the home together in order to consummate their marriage. However, before entering the home the couple should say "Bismillah." This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Jabir (RA) reportedly said: **"I heard the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) saying, 'If a person mentions the Name of Allah upon entering his house or eating, Satan says, addressing his followers: 'You will find nowhere to spend the night and no dinner.' But if he enters without mentioning the Name of Allah, Satan says [To his followers]; 'You have found [A place] to spend the night in;' and if he does not mention the Name of Allah at the time of eating, Satan says, 'You have found [A place] to spend the night in as well as food.'"**

Engaging in sexual relations with one's spouse is an important aspect of a marriage which Islam has explained in great detail in order for the Muslim ummah to have the ideal model for proper conduct which will elevate the act from the level of mere bestial pleasure and physical desire to an act of

worship which will provide a couple with both physical and spiritual reward. The evidence supporting the fact that Allah has prescribed marriage as the only lawful means of procreation is Surah Al-Rum (30:21) of the Quran which reads: **"And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): Verily in that are Signs for those who reflect**." Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Ahmad (RA) reports: "**(A Muslim) would have intercourse with his spouse and would be rewarded for it. The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) asked: 'Oh Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)! A person would be rewarded while satisfying his sexual need?' Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) replied: 'Yes. Is not it a fact that he would be punished had he practiced sex illegally? The same applies if a Muslim practiced lawful intercourse with his spouse. As such, he would be rewarded**.'" With this being said, it is important to reiterate the fact that a female can be married prior to puberty in Islam; however, in order to lawfully consummate the marriage and/or accompany her husband to his home, the young wife in question must receive her menses or one of the other signs of puberty; i.e., when she becomes a women both religiously (according to God's law) and biologically.

Preparing one's body prior to consummating the marriage:

As a general practice, a Muslim should always be neat and have good personal hygiene. However, special care should be taken to ensure that one is as pleasing to their new spouse as possible. Therefore, it is advisable that each spouse should perform the following:

brush their teeth in order to remove any debris and freshen one's breath. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Ayesha was asked what the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) did when he first came home? She was reported to have said, "**When he (P.B.U.H.) entered his house, the first thing he would do was use the siwaak (twig used to brush/clean the teeth)**."

Ensure that one's body smells pleasant; because, the freshest one's body smells is after a shower or a quick wash, and the worst it smells is after it is saturated with sweat and has not been cleaned for an extended period of time! Therefore a complete ghusl or at least wudu, accompanied by washing the private parts is strongly encouraged. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222) of the Quran which reads: "**.... For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean**."

Apply perfumes, oils and the like to add a pleasant aroma to the body. It is also important to note that it is better to use natural substances that have been recommended in Islam as they lack chemical ingredients which may cause damage to the body. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Imran ibn Husayn narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'I do not ride on purple, or wear a garment dyed with saffron, or wear a shirt hemmed with silk.' Pointing to the collar of his shirt al-Hasan (al-Basri) said: 'The perfume used by men should have an odor but no color, and the perfume used by women should have a color but no odor.' Sa'id said: 'I think he said: They interpreted his tradition about perfume used by women as applying to when she comes out. But when she is with her husband in the home, she may use any perfume she wishes**."

Lawfully groom one's body by removing what has been detailed in the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) sunnah. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Hurayrah narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: He who has hair should honor it**." Additional evidence is found in the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir bin Abdullah narrated: "**..... I replied, I am newly married.' He (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Did you marry a virgin or a matron?' I replied, 'A matron.' ... When we were about to enter (Medina), the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Wait so that you may enter**

(Medina) at night so that the lady of unkempt hair may comb her hair and the one whose husband has been absent may shave her pubic region.'" Furthermore, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Harairah reports: "**The Prophet (PBUH) recommended five things for the Muslim as commendable acts: circumcision (for males), removal of pubic hair, removing arm pit hair, trimming the moustache (for males), and clipping the nails**." Moreover, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Anas (RA) maintains that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) set a time limit with regard to some of these sunnahs, stating that they should not be left for more than forty days. The hadith in question reads as follows: Anas (RA) reportedly said: "**A time limit was set for us with regard to cutting the moustache, clipping the nails, plucking the armpit hairs and shaving the pubes – we were not to leave these for more than forty days**." Lastly, the nails of the female can be beautified by adding henna. This fact is evident from the hadith of abu Dawud wherein Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin (RA) narrated: "**A woman made a sign from behind a curtain to indicate that she had a letter for the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.). The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) closed his hand, saying: 'I do not know if this is a man's or a woman's hand.' She said: 'No, a woman.' He said: 'If you were a woman, you would make a difference to your nails, meaning with henna (henna stains the nails like nail polish;**

however, unlike nail polish, it does not prevent water from penetrating the nails during wudu or ghusl).'"

Approach one's wife prior to intercourse in a manner that is characteristic of a God-fearing person; thus, invoking Allah's blessing upon the union and exhaust every effort to ease her tension and make her as comfortable as possible. This is the sunnah; because, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) instructed the groom to be kind to his bride, and to comfort her while invoking Allah's blessing. The evidence for this advice is found in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:223) of the Quran which reads: **"Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will; but do some good act for your souls beforehand; and fear Allah. And know that ye are to meet Him (in the Hereafter) and give (these) good tidings to those who believe."**

As soon as the husband and wife are together in their home for the first time, he should audibly thank Allah for rewarding him with such a woman as his wife. By doing so audibly in her presence, this will not only be reassuring to the new wife's self-esteem; i.e., erasing any doubt that her new husband will not pleased with her looks, but will also motivate her to work hard at keeping him satisfied with her personality and character. Likewise, the wife should say similar to the husband; such as pointing out the kindness she sees in him. The reason

being, even if the new wife is not a virgin, there is still likely to be some feelings of apprehension about what will happen on the wedding night when the marriage is consummated; thus, by stressing the fact that she is attracted to the kindness in his disposition, the new husband will be inclined to reflect upon this attribute during their first sexual encounter and at later instances of conflict throughout the marriage; i.e., focus on being gentle and considerate with the wife's virginity and if he were to become angry with her at any point in the future, he would reflect upon her statement regarding the kindness she sees in him and will likely refrain from verbally and physically abusing her. The evidence for these and similar directives is found in the hadith collected by Abu Dawud wherein Ibn Masud, Abu Dhar, and other companions (RA) reportedly said to Abu Sa'id (a freed man of Abu Usayd) when marying: **"When you enter upon your wife (for the first time), you have first to perform two rak'ats and then hold your wife's head and say, 'O Allah! Bless my wife for me, bless me for my wife, give her bounty out of me, and give me bounty out of her!' Then you can do what you want.'"**

Next, after a husband places his hand on his wife's forehead and prays two rakahs, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) recommended that the couple should start every act of

intercourse by saying: "In the name of Allah, O Allah, protect us from Shaytan and protect whatever You give to us from Shaytan." The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas reportedly said: "The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, **"If anyone of you, when having sexual intercourse with his wife, says: Bismillah, Allahumma jannibni-Sh-Shaitan wa jannib-ish-Shaitan ma razaqtana, and if it is destined that they should have a child, then Satan will never be able to harm him**." Thus, in addition to satisfying one's sexual desires, intercourse is also the method which Allah instituted for mankind's as a means of procreation. This fact is evident from another hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Jabir bin Abdullah narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, '..... (O Jabir!) Seek to have offspring, seek to have offspring**!'" It is also important to note that although it is practical to have sexual intercourse on the very first night of marriage after the wedding ceremony, the act of sexual intercourse may be delayed, and even methods of birth control can be employed if there are mitigating circumstances justifying said practices. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir narrated: "**In the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) when the Quran was coming down, we used to withdraw the penis, so if it had been something to be forbidden, the Quran would have forbade us from doing it**." However, it is worth mentioning that the act of

birth control in Islam is strongly discouraged and ineffective against preventing one's wife from getting pregnant if Allah has decreed it. This fact is evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri narrated: "A man said, **'O Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.), I have a slave-girl and I withdraw the penis while having intercourse with her and do not want her to conceive, but I want (from her) what men want from women; and the Jews used to say, 'Withdrawing the penis to avoid conception is the minor burying alive.' He (P.B.U.H.) replied, "The Jews told a lie, for if Allah wishes to create it you would not be able to turn it away**."

Say bismillah before removing one's clothes. The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Anas narrated that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "**When a person undresses for the purpose of either relieving himself or bathing or having relations with his spouse then the shaytan interferes and plays with his or her private parts. But if he or she says Bismillah before taking off the clothes, then this serves as a barrier and safety against the shaytan and jinn**." Furthermore, a husband and wife should take into account the distress that could ensue from stripping completely naked in the bedroom for the first time. Therefore, the couple should close the door to the room and remove their clothes in a manner that diminishes their feeling

of shyness. Thus, the lights in the bedroom should be turned off or at least dimmed if the room will become too dark to safely maneuver about. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Jabir bin Abdullah narrated: "**Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, '(At bedtime) cover the utensils, close the doors, and put out the lights, ...**'" Moreover, the proof that the innate feeling of shyness (haya) that one experiences when removing their clothing in the presence of their new spouse is actually virtuous character trait is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abdullah ibn Umar reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) passed by a man who was admonishing his brother regarding Haya and was saying, 'You are very shy, and I am afraid that might harm you.' On that, Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Leave him, for Haya is (a part) of Faith**.'"

It is also important to note that a husband and wife are not required to completely strip while standing; rather, they can accommodate their shyness by simply removing their clothing while sitting; i.e., just as the shoes are to be put on and removed while in a seated position. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Jabir reported: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) forbade a man to do up his sandals while standing up**." Likewise, the sunnah method of removing

one's clothing is detailed in the following hadith of Bukhari, under the chapter on clothing, which reads as follows: "**When wearing one's trousers, first put on the right leg, then the left one. When putting on a kurta or shirt, first put on the right sleeve and then the left one. The same procedure should be followed when wearing a vest. When wearing a shoe, first put on the right shoe. When removing any garment or shoe, first remove the left, then the right. This is the sunnah method when removing any garment from the body**."

Lastly, since the couple is likely to be quite shy in front of each other, it is advisable that the husband and wife should remove their underwear while lying underneath the covers, after the bed has been wiped clean and purified by invoking Allah's name. This course of action is extremely advantageous; because, if the husband is well endowed, seeing the size of his private part may add further stress to the new wife who is likely to be a virgin. Thus, by removing his underwear under the covers, the husband will spare his new bride from experiencing any unnecessary stress surrounding the matter of consummating the marriage. Furthermore, the evidence for the practice of wiping the bed with a garment before lying on it is found in a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira reported: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When anyone of you goes to bed, he should dust**

it off thrice with the edge of his garment, and say: Bismika Rabbi wada'tu janbi, wa bika arfa'hu. In amsakta nafsi faghfir laha, wa in arsaltaha fahfazha bima tahfaz bihi 'ibadaka-s-salihin.'" Furthermore, another narration from Abu Huraira in the collection of Imam Muslim reports: **"Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: 'When any one of you goes to bed, he should take hold of the hem of his lower garment and then should clean (his bed) with it and should then recite the name of Allah for he himself; because, he does not know what harmful thing was left behind for him on his bed; and when he intends to lie on the bed, he should lie on his right side and utter these words: 'Hallowed be Allah, my Lord. It is with Your (grace) that I place my side (upon this bed) and it is because of You that I take it up (after sleeping). And in case You withhold my being (if You cause me to die), then grant pardon to my being, and if You maintain (my life), then protect it with that with which You protected Your pious servants.'"** Lastly, it is a smart decision to place a towel on the bottom bed sheet as a safety precaution against any possible bleeding which may occur.

The act of sexual intercourse should always be preceded by foreplay; because, it is a well known fact that even while fasting the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would show affection to his wives by passionately kissing them in the mouth. This fact is evident

from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Aisha (RA) reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) would kiss her whilst he was fasting and he would suck her tongue**." Thus, in light of this evidence, it is safe to say that since the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) went as far as to show his wife affection by passionately kissing her while fasting, there is no excuse for any husband not to kiss his wife and engage in other acts of foreplay prior to having sexual intercourse with her. However, it is important to point out the fact that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was not like other men with regard to self-control. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Ayesha (RA) narrated: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) used to kiss (his wives) while fasting and embraced (them) while fasting; but he had the greatest mastery over his desire among you**."

With this being said, even though foreplay is encouraged prior to engaging in sexual intercourse, it is not recommended that a man with heightened sexual desire should kiss his wife while fasting if he does not have sufficient self-control. Furthermore, it is even prohibited in Islam for a young man to kiss his wife while he is fasting due to the likelihood that he will not be able to adequately keep his desires in check. This fact is evident from a hadith in Malik's Muwatta wherein he reportedly said: "**Yahya related to me from Malik from Zayd ibn**

Aslam from Ata ibn Yasar that Abdullah ibn Abbas was asked about people kissing while fasting and he said that he (P.B.U.H.) allowed it for old men but disapproved of it for young men."

Nevertheless, outside of fasting, it is important to reiterate that a husband should exhaust ever effort during foreplay to administer kisses, kind words, caressing, and the like to ensure that his wife is fully aroused in order to make the act of sex as enjoyable as possible for her. This point is further addressed in Turning Sex into Sadaqa, an excerpt taken from a publication by Ruqaiyyah Waris Maqsood titled, *The Muslim Marriage Guide;* wherein she states, "kisses and words' do not just include foreplay once intimacy has commenced. To set the right mood, little signals should begin well in advance, so that the wife has a clue as to what is coming, and is pleasantly expectant, and also has adequate time to make herself clean, attractive and ready. As regards intimacy itself, all men know that they cannot achieve sexual fulfillment if they are not aroused. They should also realize that it is actually harmful and painful for the female organs to be used for sex without proper preparation. In simple biological terms, the woman's private parts need a kind of natural lubrication before the sexual act takes place. For this, Allah has created special glands, known to modern doctors as the Bartholin glands, which provide the necessary 'oils.'"

It is also worth mentioning that throughout a couple's married life, a husband should keep in mind the fact that his wife is a more emotional creation than he, and as such, he should keep their love-life healthy by frequently performing acts which will let his wife know that she is still desirable to him. It is also important to note that telling one's wife that you love her is all fine and good, but steps should be taken to let her that that you find her sexy and that she is able to satisfy you sexually. The reason being, men enjoy being pleased sexually; however, women on the other hand, too also enjoy being pleased sexually but seem to find more comfort in the fact that they are able to give pleasure to their husbands. This is why the average husband will rollover and go to sleep without having any desire to cuddle with his wife after climaxing during intercourse; However, a wife on the other hand will engage in certain acts which do not necessarily interest her at all, solely because she is aware of the fact that her mate finds them pleasurable. What is more, a wife will even persist with performing said acts until her husband is completely satisfied; and only then will she cease. So, in a wife's defense, she may be more selfish when it comes to receiving attention throughout the day; however, it is the husband who will generally assume the selfish role at night, particularly when the couple engages in sexual intercourse.

Women love being desired and appreciated! With this being said, while engaging in foreplay leading up to actual intercourse, a husband should behave very sincerely, politely and tenderly toward his wife, constantly remembering to shower her with love and compassion. This will prepare his spouse both physically and psychologically. He should also make her feel so comfortable that she will speak freely to him when feeling discomfort. A God-fearing husband should also remember that he can obtain blessings from Allah for performing the act of sex in a manner that will not make his wife fear and despise having sexual intercourse. As such, he should not be hasty and rude; forcing her into uncomfortable positions. Both parties should actively take part in the act; thus, a wife should be permitted to experience sexual satisfaction by being complemented, caressed, and permitted to receive pleasure in any position and manner she finds enjoyable. It is therefore important to reiterate that a couple can satisfy themselves in any manner they prefer, even if it goes against the cultural norms of the older generations; except those acts which Allah has explicitly forbidden, such as anal sex and while menstruating. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:223) of the Quran which reads: **"Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will....."** However, it is important to note in instances where a husband has more than one wife, even though

Allah permits him the right to have more than one wife, he is not permitted to engage in sexual intercourse simultaneously with them. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abd al-Rahman, the son of Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, reported from his father: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'A man should not see the private parts of another man, and a woman should not see the private parts of another woman, and a man should not lie with another man under one covering, and a woman should not lie with another woman under one covering.** Furthermore, a similar hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri reports: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'A man should not look at the private parts of another man, and a woman should not look at the private parts of another woman. A man should not lie with another man without wearing lower garment under one cover; and a woman should not lie with another woman without wearing a lower garment under one cover.'"**

While on the subject of looking at the private parts, even though the above mentioned ahadith explicitly prohibit two wives from simultaneously being under the same covering or exposing their private parts to the other, a husband however, is permitted to either have intercourse with his wife under a covering or with her body exposed. This fact is evident from the

above mentioned verse from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:223) of the Quran which reads: "**Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will....**;" and from a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Mu'awiyah ibn Haydah reportedly said: "**I asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), which of our privacy can we show? The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Keep your privacy hidden except before your wife and what your right hand possesses.'**" Nevertheless, a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi that was narrated by Ya'la ibn Umayya reports: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Verily Allah is modest and discreet and He likes modesty and discretion....'**" Therefore, since a new husband and wife are expected to be shy in front of each other, the nervousness and fear of having one's nakedness exposed can be appeased by simply performing the sex act under the covers. Also, while under the covers, the couple should talk for some time with the husband telling the wife how beautiful she is while slowly caressing her body. The husband can also ease the tension in the room without ruining the mood with excessive conversation by pointing out to his wife during the conversation what he actually finds most desirable about her. This will in the same instance allow the wife to loosen up to her husband's advances and gain confidence in her body and ability to please her husband. Even if the new wife feels shy to speak or to confide in her new spouse, the husband should continue with

sincere conversation and intimacy in order to enter her heart gradually; because, the time the he spends getting her aroused is an investment. If he invests his time wisely and establishes a good rapport of intimacy with his wife, it will pay off to the point that his wife will learn to be lustful towards him; with sex being viewed as a highpoint of their relationship versus a burdensome task. However, if a new wife is not able to overcome her shyness and anxiety, the husband should be mindful that the first night is not an unchangeable measure; and if unsuccessful, it should be accepted as a normal occurrence. Moreover, by being patient and understanding, the husband will gain the respect and trust of his new wife. He should then hold her in his arms and spend the night cuddled up with her; because, he can always pick up where he left off at a few hours later.

The breaking of one's virginity generally should not pose any major complications for a new wife or husband under normal circumstances. Therefore, to ensure that the wife is adequately aroused and lubricated, the husband should "gently" caress the opening of her vagina with his fingers. He should also attempt to slowly loosen the opening by gradually inserting the tip of one finger into it. This course of action should be accompanied by kissing and constantly asking her if he is being too rough or moving too fast. Moreover, to be considerate towards his wife, a

husband should loosen her vagina to the point that he is able to fully insert his finger, before mounting her for penetration. In essence, the husband should insert his finger with the objective of moving it in a manner that will not only loosen the pathway but will simultaneously stimulate her to the point that she will begin caressing his finger with the walls of her vagina. Similarly, he should take special care not to be forceful in any manner. Therefore, he should listen carefully to hear if she is either moaning from pleasure or groaning from pain. Also, halal lubricants can also be used if necessary when the actual penis is being inserted. With this being said, if blood is detected at any point during or after the husband actually penetrates his wife's vagina, it should be viewed as a natural byproduct of virginal intercourse. Likewise, light spotting of blood may also occur at other times during intercourse, and should only be considered problematic if it presents itself in a heavy flow or if it is accompanied by uncharacteristic and painful symptoms. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the absence of blood during the act of consummating the marriage for the first time does not mean that a wife is not a true virgin. Furthermore, there are a number of ways in which the hymen can rupture naturally; especially among women in Western societies who have the tendency to participate in activities which are generally shunned by women in traditional Islamic societies. Lastly, even

the use of tampons can actually rupture the hymen of a virgin. So, a husband should not dishonor his new wife by implying that she is not chaste if no blood is detected; because, if he cannot provide four witnesses to confirm his accusation, he will receive a punishment of eighty lashes. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Nur (24:4) of the Quran which reads: "**And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations),- flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors.**" Allah knows whether she is truthful or not; as such, Allah will deal with her on the Day of Judgment if she is in fact guilty of lewdness.

Lastly, even though the husband is permitted to have intercourse with his new wife while she is lying on her back, down on her knees, etc., he should be patient with her and gradually proceed with more advanced positions only after she begins to show signs that she is able to handle it; such as by not blocking or bracing/tensing up, which basically happens when she realizes that he will proceed gently with her. The evidence that the husband can have intercourse with his wife in various positions is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir (RA) reportedly said: "**The Jews claimed that whenever one approaches his wife from her back, the child will be born cross-eyed. Therefore**

Allah revealed, 'Your wives are as a tilth unto you so approach your tilth when or how you will.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said when explaining that verse to us: "(It is permissible for one) to approach his wife's vagina from rear or front position.'"

If by chance that one or both of the newlyweds are disabled, they should also take things slowly and constantly check to see if their spouse is having a good time. If by chance either spouse experiences a great deal of discomfort or feels as though there is too much pressure on their body, the couple should accommodate the situation and switch to an alternate position. Sexual positioning devises such as the thigh sling are quite useful in this situation. It is also important to note that penetration is not always necessary for sexual intercourse to be enjoyable. In many instances, having a disability actually makes penetration difficult or just plain hard work. Therefore, if this is the case, it may be advantageous to simply use sex devices to assist in pleasuring the other spouse; because, many individuals with disabilities find it easier to achieve sexual fulfillment in this manner than through the traditional penetrative sex methods. Lastly, a husband or wife should avoid thinking too much about whether or not they will achieve an orgasm. They should rather concentrate on the pleasurable feelings that they and their spouse are experiencing.

If a husband and wife are able to successfully consummate their marriage but the act does not live up to the couple's expectations; such as the husband climaxing too soon or even before actual penetration has occurred, the husband should continue to satisfy his wife through other means until he is revitalized and able to reengage her in the sex act. This fact is evident from the commentary of Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, former President of the Islamic Society of North America, regardinng Surah Al-Baqarah (2:187) of the quran. Dr. Siddiqi reports as follows: "It is also emphasized in Islam that a husband should not deny his wife's physical needs. Both of them are related to each other, as Allah says in the Quran, 'They are a garment for you and you are a garment for them ...'" Dr. Siddiqi further stated, "A husband who without any genuine reason neglects his wife's needs is as sinful as a wife who neglects her husband's needs without any excuse..." Likewise, a statement of Imam Ahmad that was narrated by Ibn qudamah reports: "**Imam Ahmad was once asked whether the man was rewarded for having sex with his wife while he did not have any desire for sex. Ahmad replied affirmatively**." Therefore, once revitalized, the husband in question should now be able to perform with more vigor; because, the initial excitement is now over and ejaculation in this second instance generally does not occur as quickly. Nevertheless, although, the new husband might

be slightly embarrassed by what he considers to be a subpar performance due to is overzealousness, just like the new wife who is unable to perform the sex act on the very first attempt, this incident (climaxing before actual penetration or immediately thereafter) should be viewed as totally normal for him as well.

It is also important to note that in certain instances, some men are even plagued with temporary sexual impotence due to the excessive excitement or anxiety surrounding the event which is expected to take place on the wedding night. Therefore, if the new husband does in fact find himself in this particular situation, it would be practical to delay the act of sexual intercourse for a couple of hours or until he notices himself becoming erect. The act can even be delayed a few days if necessary. However, if unable to achieve an erection after a week, the husband in question should seek medical assistance. Furthermore, while addressing the issue of delaying consummating the marriage, it is imperative that a husband who is enlisted in the military be aware of the fact that he must not go to war until his marriage is officially consummated. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira narrated: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'A prophet among the prophets went for a military expedition and said to his people: 'A man who has**

married a lady and wants to consummate his marriage with her and he has not done so yet, should not accompany me.'"

As for the matter of delaying consummating the marriage in instances where a new husband is plagued with temporary sexual impotence, according to a fatwa issued by Shaykh Bin Baz on June 26, 1998 in Riyadh (Okaz newspaper), when questioned as to whether the drug Viagra which is currently being used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction was permissible for use, he allegedly said, "Using this drug that helps sexual intercourse is permissible and there is no legal Islamic prohibition against it provided that it does not contain ingredients which may be deemed harmful to one's health or any intoxicating materials." With this being said, the husband and wife who know what to expect with regard to this and similar situations will be mentally prepared on their wedding night. Thus, the couple will not be plagued by feelings of despair regarding their performance. The wife should also accept and tolerate the situation if her new husband does not perform as expected. She should find subtle ways of reassuring him that she is not disappointed, such as kissing on him and caressing his body in a manner which will communicate to him that she is aroused and has the desires to satisfy him further. This will also be a good time for the new wife to gain more confidence in their sexual

relationship. While initiating her brand of foreplay, she should subtly touch her husband in places that will make him aroused. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir Ibn 'Abdullah narrated: "**..... He (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Why have you not married a virgin to fondle with each other**?"

The reasoning behind advancing subtly is due to the fact that men generally have shallow egos which are bruised quite easily. Therefore, being too aggressive could intimidate him and actually diminish his sex drive. With this being said, the new wife should therefore coax his ego by telling him what she enjoyed most and what she desires for him to do next to pleasure her. This type of communication is very advantageous; because, a successful sex-life in a marriage is based on a husband and wife's ability to honestly express themselves to their spouse.

If a husband and wife can establish a level of communication and rapport in their marriage to the point where they can divulge any fantasy or thought which might enter their mind, their relationship will not be plagued by feelings of boredom, insecurity, and an overall lack of sexual fulfillment. Sadly, it is unlikely that most couples will ever receive open and upfront information such as this. As a result, many Muslims will spend their lives in lifeless marriages.

Even if a husband and wife are fortunate enough to receive open and upfront advice as to how to have a healthy sex-life, neither of them is permitted to discuss the intimate details of their marriage in an explicit manner. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said "**The most evil of the people to Allah on the Day of Resurrection will be the man who consorts with his wife and then publicizes her secret**. Furthermore, a husband or wife should not even describe the physical appearance of another person to the point that the other spouse or a third party can formulate a mental image of the individual being described. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'a woman should not look at or touch another woman to describe her to her husband in such a way as if he was actually looking at her**.'" Lastly, according to a hadith collected by Ahmad, Asma bint Yazid reportedly said: "**I was once in the presence of the Prophet and there were both men and women sitting. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) then said: 'Perhaps a man might discuss what he does with his wife, or perhaps a woman might inform someone what she did with her husband?' The people were silent. Then I said: 'O, Yes! O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) verily both the women and men do that.' Then the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Do not do that**.

It is like a male Satan who meets a female Satan along the way, and has sex with her while the people look on!'"

After completing the initial sex act for a substantial period of time for which the couple does not regard as mere resting until revitalized, a complete ghusl or at least wudu should be performed by the husband and wife. Tayammum may also be performed if the couple does not possess adequate water. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein it is stated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: 'If one of you had intercourse with his wife and then wants to come to her again, it is better for him to perform ablution, for it gives him vigor to come again**." However, if a husband has intercourse with his wife and wants to come back to her a second time, and is able to perform a complete ghusl between the two actions; this is more beneficial. The evidence for this position is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Raafi' narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) went around his wives one day and did ghusl in this one's house and in this one's house. He (Abu Raafi') said: 'I said to him, O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), why do you not do one ghusl?' He said, 'This is cleaner and better and purer**.'" What is more, according to a hadith collected by Imam Muslim, Ayesha (RA) is reported to have said: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) did ghusl after having**

intercourse, he would start by washing his hands, then he would pour water with his right hand onto his left hand and wash his private parts, then he would do wudu as for prayer; then he would take the water and put his fingers in his hair till he reached the roots, and when he saw that the water had reached the roots, he would pour water over his head three times. Then he poured water over the rest of his body; then he washed his feet." Likewise, another hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim further reports that Umm Salamah (RA) reportedly said: "**I said, O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), I am a woman who braids her hair, should I undo it to perform ghusl after having intercourse?' (According to another report, she said: 'And after my period?') He said, 'No. It is enough for you to pour water on your head three times.'**"

Lastly and most importantly, the permissibility to perform tayammum is found in Surah Al Ma'idah (5:6) of the Quran which reads: "**..... But if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women, and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands (tayammum), Allah doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favor to you, that ye may be grateful.**"

After ghusl or some other form of purification has been made, and the husband and wife plan retire to bed for sleep, the couple should ensure that all utensils have been put away, that all food dishes are covered, that all doors have been closed, and that all lights are turned off (Specifically lights from a real fire source). The evidence for this ruling is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Jabir bin Abdullah narrated: "**Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, '(At bedtime) cover the utensils, close the doors, and put out the lights, lest the evil creature (the rat) should pull away the wick and thus burn the people of the house.**'" Furthermore, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Jabir bin Abdullah reports: "Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, "**When night falls (or when it is evening), stop your children from going out, for the devils spread out at that time. But when an hour of the night has passed, release them and close the doors and mention Allah's Name, for Satan does not open a closed door. Tie the mouth of your water-skin and mention Allah's Name; cover your containers and utensils and mention Allah's Name. Cover them even by placing something across it, and extinguish your lamps.**"

Once inside the bed, the couple may either lie-down cuddled together or separated, as long as they are lying down on their right side with their hands under their cheek, or in a position

other than on their stomach. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abu Mulaika reportedly said: "**Aisha said, 'The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) died in my house on the day of my turn while he was leaning on my chest closer to my neck...'**" Furthermore, another hadith collected by Bukhari reports: "**Aisha said, The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and I used to wash from the same container when we were both in janaba. While I was menstruating, he told me to wrap my waist-wrapper around myself and then he cuddled me...**" Likewise, the evidence for sleeping without being cuddled id a hadith of Bukhari wherein Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib said, "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to retire to his bed, he would lie on his right side and then say, 'O Allah, I surrender my soul to You and I turn my face to You and I entrust my affair to You and I seek Your support with hope and fear of You. There is no refuge from You but to You. I have believed in Your Book which You sent down and Your Prophet whom You sent.'**" Moreover, according to another hadith in the collection of Bukhari, Hudhaifa allegedly said: "**When the Prophet (saws) retired to bed at night, he (saws) would put his hand under his (right) cheek and then say, "Allahumma bismika amutu wa ahya (O Allah, by Your Name I die and I live)" and when he (saws) got up (from sleep), he (saws) would say, "Al-Hamdu lil-lahi al-ladhi ahyana ba'da ma amatana, wa ilaihi an-nushur (Praise be to Allah Who gave us life after death, and to Him is**

the return." Similarly, additional evidence for the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) positions of sleeping is detailed in another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abdullah ibn Zayd who reported: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) lying on his back in the mosque with one foot on top of the other.**" Lastly, Ya'ish ibn Tikhfa al-Ghifari is reported to have said, "**My father reported: "Once while I was lying on my stomach in the mosque, a man moved me with his foot and said, 'This is a position which Allah hates (sleeping on the stomach).' He said, 'I looked up and it was the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.).'"**

If the wife is experiencing her menses (hayd) on the day of the nikah (wedding), she and her new husband will not be able to consummate their marriage until after her menses has passed and she has purified herself; because, Islam has strictly prohibited one from engaging in sexual intercourse during menstruation. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222) of the Quran which reads: "**They ask thee concerning women's courses. Say: They are a hurt and a pollution; So keep away from women in their courses and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, ye may approach them in any manner, time, or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.**" Likewise, Abu Hurayrah reported

in a hadith collected by Abu Dawud that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) allegedly said: "**If anyone resorts to a diviner and believes in what he says, or has intercourse with his wife when she is menstruating, or has intercourse with his wife through her anus: he has nothing to do with what has been sent down to Muhammad (P.B.U.H.)**!" What is more, Ibn Abbas (RA) was even of the opinion that one guilty of having sexual intercourse with his wife while she is menstruating should be required to give half a Dinar as expiation. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud which declares: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: 'Whoever has sex with his wife during her menses (*hayd*) should pay half a Dinar**.'"

With this being said, the one guilty of having sexual intercourse during their menstrual cycle should purify themselves physically by performing a complete ghusl and spiritually by making a sincere repentance to Allah. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When a man sits in between the four parts of a woman (two arm and two legs) and has sexual intercourse with her, a bath becomes compulsory**." Furthermore, the evidence for making a sincere repentance to Allah is a hadith collected by Tirmidhi wherein Anas (RA) reportedly said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) say,

Allah stated: '**O son of Adam! I will forgive your sins no matter how many you have committed irrespective of their greatness as long as you pray to me and you expect forgiveness from me. O son of Adam! I will forgive you even if your sins are so many as to fill the skies if you ask forgiveness from me. O son of Adam! If you come to me with so many sins as to fill the earth, I will welcome you with so much mercy as to fill the earth if you have not associated partners with me.**'" Lastly, even though having sexual intercourse during the time of menses (hayd) is a detestable act, a husband is still permitted to embrace his wife, provided that her vaginal area is adequately covered. This fact is evident from a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from Zaynab bint Abi Salama: "**Umm Salama said, 'Once while I was with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) under a black woolen cover I started my menstrual period and I slipped away and came out of it and got my menstruation clothes. The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said to me, 'Have you started menstruating?' I said. 'Yes.' He called to me and I lay down again with him under the cover.**'" Likewise, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated by Ayesha (RA) reports: "**When anyone amongst us (amongst the wives of the Prophet) menstruated, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) would ask her to tie a waist-wrapper over her (body) and then he would embrace her.**" However, as a precaution, it is better for the couple if

the husband does not play with his wife's body between the navel and the knees to avoid coming into contact with her menstrual blood. Lastly, if at any time during sexual intercourse the wife discovers that her period has begun, the husband should immediately cease the sex act and purify himself. In this instance he will not be considered sinful in the eyes of Allah provided that he stops immediately after discovering the presence of his wife's menstrual blood.

In instances wherein a wife is experiencing vaginal bleeding that is not related to menstruation (hayd), her husband in this instance, is permitted to have sexual intercourse with her provided that she purifies her body before commencing the sex act. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ayesha (RA) reportedly said: "**Fatimah bint Abi Hubaysh came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and said: 'O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), I am a woman who experiences Istihadah (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding) and I do not become clean from bleeding. Should I forget about Salah?' He said: 'No, that is from a vein; it is not menses. When your period starts, then stop praying, and when it ends, wash the blood from your body and pray again.'**" What is more, another version of this hadith that was narrated by Abu Mu'awiyah reported that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) further said: "**Make Wudu for each prayer, until the**

time for the next prayer comes...'" Thus, in view of the above mentioned ahadith, since the female's body is considered purified to the point that she is permitted to make her daily required fard prayers, her body is therefore considered purified to the extent that she can lawfully engage in sexual intercourse with her husband. Likewise, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Umm Salamah (RA) provides the method for which a wife should use to distinguish her non-menstrual vaginal bleeding (istihadah) from her menses (hayd). The hadith in question reads as follows: "**I asked the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) about this condition. He (P.B.U.H.) said, 'She should wait for the days and nights of her normal period and figure them out of the month, and she should leave the prayer during those days. (Afterwards) she should perform ghusl, tighten something around her vagina and then pray.**'" Therefore, once a wife is able to distinguish her non-menstrual vaginal bleeding (istihadah) from her menses (hayd), based on her body's normal cycle, she should then purify herself with a complete ghusl, and thereafter, she will lawfully be permitted to have sexual intercourse with her husband.

With this being said, it is important to note that hayd is the natural flow of blood from the womb which occurs approximately monthly in a woman after her body starts to have a

monthly period. If the bleeding exceeds the longest duration of hayd, it is merely classified as irregular vaginal bleeding which is referred to as istihadah. Unlike menses, which has a blood source that stems from the uterus after puberty and contains unfertilized ova, the non-menstrual vaginal bleeding of istihadah is generally caused by the al-adhil vein or some other reason; i.e., it is purely blood. However, due to the dilemma of determining the longest duration of a female's actual hayd, the issues pertaining to menstruation can be quite controversial. This fact is evident from the statements of Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (RA) in Majmoo' Al-Fataawaa, 19/237 wherein he reportedly said: "Allah has attached numerous rulings to menses in the Quran and Sunnah; however, He did not state the minimum or maximum length of a female's menstrual cycle; nor the length of the period of purity between two separate menstrual cycles." He further said: "Some of the scholars defined a maximum and minimum, but they differed concerning that, and some even stated a maximum length without defining a minimum. Nevertheless, the third view is most correct, which states that <u>there is no minimum or maximum length for a female's menstrual cycle</u>." Therefore, if a wife experiences regular monthly periods, and then becomes irregular and exceeds the longest duration of her hayd, or if she was never regular and now her periods are longer

than the longest hayd duration of any previous menstrual cycle, she will be regarded as a mustahadah.

According to Shaykh Bin Baz, "A Mustahadah is a woman who suffers from abnormal vaginal bleeding outside the menstrual or post-partum periods. As such, the same ruling will apply to her as any other non-menstruating women. Accordingly, she is allowed to observe Sawm (Fast), offer Salah (Prayer), and have sexual intercourse with her husband. However, she must perform wudu (ablution) before each Salah, as in the case of one who should perform wudu due to passing urine or wind. She also has to clean away the discharged blood with a piece of cotton or something similar to keep her body and clothes clean." With this being said, the wife who is regarded as Mustahadah will belong to one of the following three categories:

1. The wife is able to differentiate between the menstrual (hayd) which is dark in color, thick and heavy in consistency, with a distinct smell, and does not clot; from her non-menstrual blood (istihadah) which is lighter and thinner. Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (RA) in Majmoo' Al-Fataawaa, 19/237, confirms the above mentioned distinctions between menses and istihadah to be as follows: "Color (menstrual blood is black [dark red] while the blood of istihadah is red); consistency (menstrual blood is thick

and heavy, while the blood of istihadah is thin); smell (menstrual blood has an offensive odor while the blood of istihadah does not; because, it comes from an ordinary vein); and clotting (menstrual blood does not clot when it comes out of the body while the blood of istihadah does clot because it comes from a vein)." Thus, whenever vaginal bleeding is detected by the wife, whether it is a little or a lot, it will be classified as either her menses or istihadah based on the above mentioned characteristics. The evident for the above mentioned description of menstrual blood is the hadith of Abu Dawud which reads: "**Once, when Fatimah bint Abu Habash had a prolonged flow of blood, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) told her, 'If it is the blood of menstruation, it will be dark and recognizable. If it is that, then leave the prayer. If it is other than that, then make ablution and pray, for it is only due to a vein.'**" Another version of this hadith narrated by Fatimah daughter of Abu Hubaysh reports: "**Urwah ibn az-Zubayr reported from Fatimah daughter of Abu Hubaysh that her blood kept flowing, so the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said to her: When the blood of the menses comes, it is black blood which can be recognized; so when that comes, refrain from prayer; but when a different type of blood comes, perform ablution and pray, for it is (due only to) a vein.**"

Lastly, a woman can be certain that her period has ended by two distinct signs; namely, by the presence of a white discharge which comes from the womb to show that the period is over, and by the complete absence of menstrual blood in its various shades; whenever the white discharge is not detected. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari in mu'allaq form wherein Ayesha (RA) reportedly said: "**Women would send (me) Ayesha small boxes with yellow-stained cotton, and I would tell them, 'Do not be in haste until you see the pure white discharge on the cotton.' If the discharge is yellow or muddy during the days of menstruation, it is to be considered as part of the menses. During other days, it is not regarded as such. Umm Atiyyah said, '(After we were pure), we did not consider the yellow or muddy discharge to be anything.'**" It is also worth mentioning that a wife's judgment should not be overshadowed regarding the establishment and ending of her menses; because, in a hadith collected by Bukhari, Ali and Shurayh are reported to have said: "**If a woman brings testimony from members of her close family, who are known to be good Muslims, that she menstruates three times a month, she should be believed (that the blood is not istihadah).**"

2. The wife is neither able to differentiate between the menstrual (hayd) and non-menstrual bloods (istihadah), nor can an expert assist her in telling the difference between the two; however, she is able to remember the routine of her monthly period based on the manner in which it occurred in previous months. With this being said, the evidence for the method that a female should use to differentiate between the menstrual (hayd) and non-menstrual bloods (istihadah) is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Aisha (RA) reportedly said: "**Bahiyyah said: 'I heard a woman asking Aisha about the woman whose menses became abnormal and she had an issue of blood. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) asked me to advise her that she should consider the period during which she used to menstruate every month, when her menstruation was normal. Then she should count the days equal to the length of time (of her normal menses); then she should abandon prayer during those days or equal to that period. She should then take a bath, tie a cloth on her private parts a pray.**'" Therefore, if a wife can neither distinguish between the two types of bleeding, nor can an expert, then she should govern herself according to the habit of her previous menstrual cycles, and avoid praying, fasting, and having sexual intercourse with her husband during those days of the month in which she would

generally be experiencing her menses. Anytime of the month thereafter, it is permissible for her to resume her acts of worship to Allah and have sexual intercourse with her husband.

3. A wife cannot differentiate between her menstrual (hayd) and non-menstrual bloods (istihadah), her bleeding happens to be of only one type, she cannot remember the routine of her monthly period based on the manner in which it occurred in her previous monthly cycles, or she simply has never had a monthly period prior to the occurrence of the bleeding; in this instance, the wife in question should consider her bleeding to be that of hayd for six to seven days, and then she should resume having sexual intercourse with her husband; in addition to performing her other acts of worship to Allah. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said to Hamnah bint Jahsh: "**Observe your menses for six or seven days, Allah alone knows which it should be; then wash. And when you see that you are purified and quite clean, pray for twenty three or twenty four days and nights, and fast, for that will be enough for you. Furthermore, do so every month; just like the women whom menstruate and are purified at the time of their menstruation and their purification.**"

A final and important note regarding the issue of menses involves the manner in which a wife should purify her body and keep it smelling pleasant. The evidence for the sunnah method of purification is the hadith collected by Imam Muslim, wherein Ayesha (RA) reportedly said: "**Asma inquired the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) about the bath for purity from Menses. He stated: 'First put some berry leaves (antiseptic soap, scented oil etc.) in the water. Then put the water on the head and rub the hair well so that the water reaches the roots of the hair. Then pour water on the entire body. Then take some cotton wool scented with musk and purify yourself (to remove bad smell).' Asma (RA) endured: 'How to purify by cotton wool?' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) stated: 'Pure is Allah! Purify yourself.' Ayesha (RA) whispered: 'Place it at the place of menses...'**" Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Ayesha (RA) also reports: "**Asma (RA) asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) about ghusl following menses. He said: 'Let one of you take her water and lotus leaves and clean herself well, then let her pour water over her head and rub it vigorously so that it will reach the roots of her hair. Then let her pour the water over herself, then take a piece of cloth scented with musk and purify herself.' Asma then said: 'How should she purify herself?' He (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Subhaan-Allaah! Purify yourself with it.' Ayesha said, as if she whispered it to**

her, 'Follow the traces of blood.' And she asked him about ghusl in the case of janaabah. He said: 'Let her take water and clean herself well or clean herself thoroughly, then let her pour water over her head and rub it so that it reaches the roots of the hair, then let her pour water over herself.' Ayesha said: 'How good the women of the Ansaar were! They did not let shyness prevent them from understanding their religion properly.'" Likewise, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Aisha (RA) further reports: "**A woman of the Ansar said to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) 'How should I perform ghusl after menstruation?' He said, (after making ghusl) 'Take a piece of perfumed cloth and clean yourself three times.' Then the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) became embarrassed and turned his face away. I took her and pulled her to one side and explained to her what the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) meant.'"** Moreover, in light of this evidence it is therefore important to note that when performing ghusl, a woman does not have to actually undo the braids in her hair, unless they are tied so tightly that she fears that the water will not reach the roots/scalp; because, in the hadith of Imam Muslim, Umm Salamah (RA) narrated that she said to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): "**I am a woman with braided hair; should I undo it when doing ghusl following menses or for janaabah? He said: 'No, rather it will be sufficient for you to pour three handfuls of water on your head, then pour water over yourself and you will**

be purified.'" However, there are some narrations which maintain that the braided hair of a woman at the completion of her menses must be unbraided; such as the narration from Umm Salamah in a hadith collected by Imam Muslim which states that she asked the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) about a woman's bath (ghusl), and he reportedly said: "**If a woman is performing ghusl after having sexual intercourse, then there is no need for her to unbraid her hair. It is sufficient that she pours water over her head three times. But, when she is performing ghusl after completing her menstrual period, then she has to unbraid her hair**." Nevertheless, regardless of which method a wife uses to purify herself after the completion of her menses, it is imperative that she totally avoids exposing herself to any person other than her husband; as in the case of a woman who exposes herself to others in a public bath. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith collected by Tirmidhi wherein Jabir (RA) reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not allow his wife to go to the Public baths. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him not go to the baths except with a waist-cloth. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day let him never sit at a table at which intoxicants are being circulated**.'" Likewise, the evidence for the permissibility of a wife to expose herself in front of her husband is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Hisham bin Urwa (on the

authority of his father) narrated that Aisha said: "**I and Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) used to take a bath from a single water container, from which we took water simultaneously**."

In addition to during the times of her menses, a wife is also not permitted to have sexual intercourse with her husband while she is experiencing post-natal bleeding (nifas); which is the term that applies to the blood which flows from the uterus after childbirth; regardless of whether the baby is born alive or stillborn. However, in rare instances wherein a wife gives birth to a baby without any bleeding, the general ruling pertaining to nifas will not apply to her. Therefore, in instances wherein a wife experiences difficulties during childbirth and ultimately delivers her baby by means of a Caesarian section, in which case the baby exits her body from a method other than by traveling through her vagina, she will not be classified as experiencing nifas as long her vagina does not leak any blood from the labor. Also, if a wife has a miscarriage and human features, such as the head, limbs, or even the outlines thereof have not yet appeared on the fetus, the bleeding which occurs in this instance will be classified as istihadah; because, the pregnancy has yet to produce an actual fetus. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Hajj (22:5) of the Quran which reads: **"O mankind! If you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily! We have**

created you (i.e. Adam) from dust, then from a Nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge i.e. offspring of Adam), then from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood with no circulation) then from a little lump of flesh (mudghah), partly formed and partly unformed, that We may make (it) clear to you (i.e. to show you Our Power and Ability to do what We will). And We cause whom We will to remain in the wombs for an appointed term, then We bring you out as infants, then (give you growth) that you may reach your age of full strength. And among you there is he who dies (young), and among you there is he who is brought back to the miserable old age, so that he knows nothing after having known...." Likewise, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Hudhayfa (RA) maintains that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said that it is not until after forty-five days after conception; nearly nine weeks, that the pregnancy produces an actual fetus. The hadith in question reads as follows: "**The angel is sent to the sperm-and-ovum drop (nutfah) after it has settled in the uterus for FORTY OR FORTY-FIVE NIGHTS (nearly 9 weeks after conception) and says, 'Lord! Is it to be wretched or happy?' Then this is inscribed. Then he says, 'Lord! Is it to be male or female?' Then this is inscribed, together with its deeds, its progeny, its term of life, and its sustenance. Then the records are folded up and nothing more is added or subtracted.**'" What is

more, the fact that the hadith mentions that it is not until after this forty-five day period (9 weeks after conception) that the angel asks Allah: **'Lord! Is it to be male or female?'** proves that the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) statements are in accordance with modern embryology; i.e., it is not until after the forty-five day period (9 weeks after conception) that an actual fetus is formed with its visible sex organ. This fact is evident from a December 4th, 2012 article titled, "Pregnancy week by week" from the Mayo Clinic's website (www.mayoclinic.com), which reports as follows: "At the beginning of the 11th week of pregnancy, or the ninth week after conception, your baby's head still makes up about half of its length. However, your baby's body is about to catch up, growing rapidly in the coming weeks. Your baby is now officially described as a fetus. This week your baby's eyes are widely separated, the eyelids fused and the ears low set. Red blood cells are beginning to form in your baby's liver. **By the end of this week, your baby's external genitalia will start developing into a penis or clitoris and labia majora**."

It is also worth mentioning that additional evidence proving that a pregnancy does not produce a living human until after the forty-five day period (9 weeks after conception) is the hadith of Bukhari that was narrated by Anas (RA) who reportedly said: **"Allah Most High has appointed an angel over**

the uterus who says, 'Lord! It is now a sperm-and-ovum drop (nutfa). Lord! It is now a thing that clings (alaqa). Lord! It is now a thing like chewed flesh (mudghah); i.e., partly formed partly unformed (showing that all of these early stages take place around the first forty-five days of development).' Then, when he wants to complete its fashioning (showing that at this stage (mudghah) the fetus is partly formed and partly unformed with no visible sex organ), he (the angel) asks, 'Male or female; happy or wretched? What is his share of sustenance? What is his term of life?' All this is inscribed [as it is] in his mother's belly.'" Lastly, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated from Hudhayfa ibn Asad reports: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'After the sperm-and-ovum drop (nutfa) has been [in the uterus] forty-two days, Allah sends it an angel that gives it form and fashions its hearing, sight, skin, flesh, and skeleton.'"** Thus, it is not until the mudghah stage of development that a miscarried fetus is developed to the point that it can scantily be distinguished from menses. Consequently, if human features have already appeared on the fetus, then the bleeding is classified as nifas.

In view of the above mentioned information, it is also important to note that many authorities deduce that the soul enters the fetus after four months (120 days) of pregnancy due

to the wording of the transliteration for hadith No: 4 in An-Nawawi's 40 Hadith. The hadith in question that was narrated by Abdullah bin Masud reads as follows: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) the most truthful, the most trusted, told us: 'Verily the creation of any one of you takes place when he is assembled in his mother's womb; for forty days he is as a drop of fluid, then it becomes a clot for a similar period. Thereafter, it is a lump looking like it has been chewed for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him, who breathes the ruh (spirit) into him. This Angel is commanded to write four decrees: that he writes down his provision (rizq), his life span, his deeds, and whether he will be among the wretched or the blessed...**'" The transliteration of this hadith clearly says that the fetus goes through three stages of forty days each (nutfah for 40 days, alaqah for 40 days, and mudgah for 40 days). Then, after the third stage i.e., 120 days, the soul is breathed into the human body. Therefore, the problem arises from the issue of whether the three stages in question actually occur collectively in approximately forty days or a period of forty days each.

Interestingly enough, this narration by Abdullah bin Masud was recorded with different versions wherein some words/terms conflicted with each other, resulting in different versions of the hadith having different meanings regarding a baby’s

Creation. One such problem stems from the addition of the word "nutfah" (the drop of a fluid). The word "nutfah" is neither found in the narrations collected by Bukhari nor those of Imam Muslim. However, it was added to other narrations including the one chosen by An-Nawawi to provide a better interpretation of the stages of fetal development. Unfortunately, it generated two conflicting views of the creation of mankind in terms of fetal development. In light of this dilemma, the Scientific Research Committee of IslamToday.net provides the following findings of Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo's commentary from al-Nawawi's 40 Hadith, which reads as follows: "In this case, the oversight may substantially change the meaning of the hadith. With this word (nutfah) missing, the hadith can be understood in the following manner: '**Surely, each of you is brought together in his mother's abdomen for forty days. It is then a clinging object during that same period. Then it is a lump looking like it has been chewed during the same period.**' Hence, all of these stages take place in the first forty days. This way of understanding the hadith is not only consistent with what is considered today as a 'scientific fact,' it is also consistent with the other narrations related to this topic; such as the following three Sahih ahadith from the collection of Imam Muslim, from the section of Kitab al-Qadar, which reads as follows: "**Hudhayfah bin Usayd (RA) narrated: 'After the drop (nutfah) is in the womb**

for forty or forty-five nights, the angel comes to it and says: 'O Lord, will it be fortunate or unfortunate?' And these matters shall be written. Then he says: 'O Lord, will it be male or female?'" Likewise, a second hadith reads: "**When the drop (nutfah) passes forty-two nights in the womb, God sends to it an angel who shapes it and creates its hearing, seeing, skin, flesh, and bones. Then he says: 'O Lord, is it a male or a female?' Then your Lord decrees whatever He wills...**'" Lastly, "**The drop (nutfah) remains in the womb for (about) forty nights. Then the angel appears to it...**" As a final point, it is worth mentioning that neither the Quran nor any ahadith on this subject gives a time frame of 120 days.

It is also important to note that after the stage of pregnancy wherein a fetus has fully developed hearing, sight, and feelings, it is automatically classified as a human being. This fact is evident from Surah Al-Sajdah (32:9) of the Quran which reads: "**But He fashioned him in due proportion, and breathed into him something of His spirit. And He gave you (the faculties of) hearing and sight and feeling (and understanding): little thanks do ye give**!" Also, Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:12-13) of the Quran reads: "**Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay); Then We placed him As (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest, firmly fixed; then We made the sperm into a clot of**

congealed blood; then of that clot We made A (mudghah) lump; then We made out of that lump bones and clothed the bones with flesh (in rapid succession); then We developed out of it another creature (the human being). So blessed be Allah; the best to create!"

Once it has been determined that the bleeding of a wife is not her menses, and is in fact blood related to childbirth (the features of the fetus are recognizable), as soon as the bleeding stops, the wife in question should purify her body. However, the scholars differed as to whether ghusl is obligatory in this instance; because, post-natal bleeding (nifas) has no minimum duration; i.e., bleeding does not have to last for forty days. In fact, postnatal bleeding could actually stop right after the delivery of the baby, or there may not even be a single drop of blood visible from the delivery. Thus, in the absence of postnatal bleeding the wife's restrictions would end and she would be obliged to fast, pray, have intercourse once healed, and so on. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is however a maximum duration of forty days for nifas, which is based on the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Umm Salamah, Ummul Mu'minin (RA) reportedly said: "**The woman having bleeding after delivery (postpartum bleeding) would refrain (from prayer) for forty days or forty nights; and we would anoint our faces with**

an aromatic herb called wars to remove dark spots." Moreover, another hadith of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Umm Salamah (RA) reports: "**During the lifetime of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), the post-childbirth woman would be deemed in restriction for (a maximum of) forty days**." Lastly, in the event that a wife becomes a widow due to the death of her husband, even if she is still suffering from postpartum bleeding and four months and ten days of iddah have not elapsed, she is still permitted to remarry; because Surah Al-Talaq (65:4) clearly says: "... **And as for pregnant women, their term shall end with delivery (of the baby)**." However, her nifas (post-partum bleeding) must cease before she can consummate the marriage with her new husband. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Ubaidullah bin Abdullah bin Utba (bin Mas'ud) reported that his father wrote to Umar bin Abdullah bin al Arqam al-Zuhri that he would go to Subai'ah bint al-Hirith al-Aslamiyya (RA) and ask her about a verdict from him which Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) gave her when she had asked that from him (in regard to the termination of 'Idda at the birth of a child). 'Umar bin Abdullah wrote to 'Abdullah bin 'Utba informing him: "**Subai'ah had told him that she had been married to Sa'd bin Khaula and he belonged to the tribe of Amir bin Lu'ayy, and was one of those who participated in the Battle of Badr, and he died in the Farewell Pilgrimage and she had been in**

the family way at that time. And much time had not elapsed that she gave birth to a child after his death and when she was free from the effects of childbirth she embellished herself for those who had to give proposals of marriage. Abd al-Sunabil bin Ba'kak (from Banu 'Abd al-Dar) came to her and said: 'What is this that I see you embellished; perhaps you are inclined to marry, By Allah, you cannot marry unless four months and ten days (of 'Iddah are passed).' When he said that, I dressed myself, and as it was evening I came to Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) and asked him about it, and he gave me a religious verdict that I was allowed to marry when I had given birth to a child and asked me to marry if I so liked. Ibn Shihab said: 'I do not find any harm for her in marrying when she has given birth to a child even when she is bleeding (after the birth of the child) except that her husband should not go near her (sexually) until she is purified.'"

With this being said, if the bleeding of a wife either starts or resumes within the forty day period, it will be classified as nifas; and whatever goes beyond the established timeframe of forty days will be considered istihadah (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding), which does not prevent her from praying, fasting, having intercourse with her husband, etc. It is also important to note that the blood and amniotic fluid

which accompanies the labor of childbirth is also not regarded as nifas, but rather istihadah. This issue was addressed by Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen in Fatawa Noor 'ala al-Darb when he reportedly said: "Nifas is blood and not water. Moreover, if it was nifas, it would be accompanied by labor pains two or three days before giving birth. But if this occurs a long time before giving birth, then it is not nifas; because, nifas is the blood that comes out either at the time of birth or two or three days before it; and it is also accompanied by labor pains. As for water (amniotic fluid), it is not nifas." The evidence proving that any vaginal bleeding of a wife prior to childbirth or outside of her normal menstrual cycle is actually istihadah is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ayesha (RA) reportedly said: "**Umm Habiba (RA) got bleeding in between the periods for seven years. She asked Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) about it. He ordered her to take a bath (after the termination of actual periods) and added that it was (from) a blood vessel. So she used to take a bath for every prayer.**" Furthermore, in Fataawa Islamiyyah, 1/243, Shaykh Bin Baz reportedly said: "If a woman miscarries something in which human features such as a head, arm or leg etc. can be distinguished, then the rulings of nifas apply and she should not pray or fast; neither is it permissible for her husband to have intercourse with her until she becomes pure or until forty days have passed. However, if she becomes pure before forty days

have passed, she has to perform ghusl and is then permitted to pray, fast in Ramadan, and have intercourse with her husband. But if no human features can be distinguished in what is passed by the woman, and it looks like flesh with no distinguishable features, or it is blood, then she comes under the ruling of one who is suffering from istihadah (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding)..." Shaykh Bin Baz is also quoted as saying, "If a woman’s nifas stops before the forty days (after the birth) have elapsed, she has to do ghusl and pray and fast Ramadan, and it is permissible for her husband to have intercourse with her. If however the bleeding resumes within the forty days (after the birth), then she has to stop praying and fasting, and it is forbidden for her husband to have intercourse with her, according to the more correct of the two scholarly views. She comes under the rulings on women in nifas until either the nifas stops or the forty days are over. If her nifas stops before or on the fortieth day (after the birth), then she should do ghusl and start praying and fasting; and it is permissible for her husband to have intercourse with her. If the bleeding continues after the fortieth day (after the birth), then this is irregular bleeding (istihadah) and she should not stop praying and fasting because of it; rather, she should pray and fast during Ramadan, and it is permissible for her husband to have intercourse with

her – as is the case with a woman with istihadah (irregular, non-menstrual bleeding)."

Lastly, it is important to note that even when a wife is experiencing her monthly menses or has postpartum bleeding, it is absolutely lawful in Islam for her to enjoy all sorts of relations with her husband, except the actual act of sexual intercourse. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Masruq ibn al-Ajda asked Ayesha (RA), the wife of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): **"What is off limits to me sexually during my wife's menstruation?' She said, 'Nothing, except her private parts**.'" Similarly, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Maimuna (RA) reports: **"Whenever Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) wanted to fondle any of his wives during their periods (menses), he used to ask her to wear an Izar (waist wrapper)**." Furthermore, according to Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid: "Allah has permitted intercourse between a husband and wife at all times and in all places, with the following exceptions: 'While the sun is present in the sky during the Islamic month of Ramadan, while the wife is on her menses, while they are inside the masjid, and while either of them is in a state of Ihram while performing the Hajj pilgrimage to Makkah or Umrah. However, at all other times, a husband and wife are permitted to engage in sexual intercourse.'" The evidence for

this ruling of Sheikh Muhammed Salih Al-Munajjid regarding the prohibited times of sexual intercourse between a husband and wife are found in surah Al-Baqarah (2:187) of the Quran which reads: **"Permitted to you, on the night (not during the daylight hours) of the fasts (Ramadan) is the approach to your wives. They are your garments and ye are their garments. Allah knows what you used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them, and seek what Allah Hath ordained for you, and eat and drink, until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are limits (set by) Allah; Approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to men; that they may learn self-restraint."** Further evidence is found in a hadith collected by Bukhari, wherein Abu Hurayra reportedly said: **"While we were sitting in the company of Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) a man approached and said: 'O Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)! I'm ruined!' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'What is the matter?' He said: 'I had sexual relations with my wife while observing the Ramadan fast.' Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) then asked him: 'Can you find a slave whom you can free?' He said 'no.' Then he asked, 'are you able to fast for two consecutive months?' He said 'no.' Then he asked, 'do you have the**

wherewithal to feed 60 poor people?' He said 'no!' So, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stopped and considered, and we waited like that until a large basket of dates was brought to him. He asked: 'Where is that questioner?' The man spoke up: 'Here I am.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Take this and give it out in charity.' The man then asked: 'Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), must I find someone poorer than myself to give it to? By Allah, there is no household in town poorer than my own.' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) laughed until we could see his teeth, the said: 'Go feed your family.'" Likewise, the evidence for not approaching one's wife while she is on her menses is Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222) of the Quran which reads: **"They ask thee concerning women's courses. Say: 'They are a hurt and a pollution, so keep away from women in their courses and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, you may approach them in any manner, time, or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.'"**

When a Muslim husband takes a new wife who is a virgin while already having other wives whom are matrons, his new wife will be entitled to seven days with her new husband. However, if the new wife is a matron and the other wife is a virgin, the husband in question will be required to spend three days with his new

wife. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Anas (RA) reportedly said: "**It is the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) tradition that if someone marries a virgin and he has already a matron wife, he should then stay for seven days with her (the virgin) and then by turns; and if someone marries a matron and already has a virgin wife, he should stay with her (the matron) for three days, and then by turns (among all his wives)**." Furthermore, after the established timeframe of the wife in question has elapsed, the husband will then spend time with all of his wives in turns. This fact is evident from the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abd al-Malik bin Abu Bakr bin Abd al-Rahman bin al-Harith bin Hisham reported on the authority of his father from Umm Salama (RA) who reportedly said: "**When Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) married Umm Salama, he stayed with her for three nights (she was a matron), and said: 'There is no lack of estimation on the part of your husband for you. If you wish I can stay with you for a week, but in case I stay with you for a week, then I shall have to stay for a week with all my wives**.'"

With this being said, if a husband is physically able, he is even permitted to have sexual intercourse with all of his wives in a single night; provided that he is alone with only one wife at a time. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Anas bin Malik (RA) reportedly said: "**The**

Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to pass by (have sexual relation with) all his wives in one night, and at that time he had nine wives." Likewise, after the initial timeframe allotted for a new wife based on her status as a virgin or matron has elapsed, any wife may forfeit her conjugal rights if she so wishes. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ayesha (RA) reportedly said: "**Sawda bint Zam'a (RA) gave up her turn to me (Ayesha), and so the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to give me (Ayesha) both my day and the day of Sawda**." Furthermore, in another hadith of Bukhari, Ayesha (RA) is reported to have said: "**During his fatal ailment, Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to ask his wives, 'Where shall I stay tomorrow? Where shall I stay tomorrow?' He was looking forward to Aisha's turn. So all his wives allowed him to stay where he wished, and he stayed at Aisha's house till he died there. Aisha added: 'He died on the day of my usual turn at my house. Allah took him unto Him while his head was between my chest and my neck and his saliva was mixed with my saliva.'**"

Lastly, as long as it is not the husband's intent to neglect a particular wife, he is even permitted to change the order of his rotation among his wives if either his urges are stronger on a particular day for a specific wife or a specific wife's desire for him is greater on a particular day. This fact

is evident from Surah Al-Ahzab (33:51) of the Quran which reads: "**Thou mayest defer (the turn of) any of them that thou pleasest, and thou mayest receive any thou pleasest: and there is no blame on thee if thou invite one whose (turn) thou hadst set aside. This were nigher to the cooling of their eyes, the prevention of their grief, and their satisfaction - that of all of them - with that which thou hast to give them: and Allah knows (all) that is in your hearts: and Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.**" Further evidence is found in the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Anas (RA) reportedly said: "**Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) had nine wives. So when he divided (his stay) with them, the turn of the first wife did not come but on the ninth (day). They (all the wives) used to gather every night in the house of one where he had to come (and stay that night). It was (the night when he had to stay) in the house of 'A'isha (RA), when Zainab (RA) came there. He (the Holy Prophet) stretched his hand towards her (Zainab), whereupon she ('A'isha) said: 'It is Zainab (inquiring if she is being chosen).' Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) then withdrew his hand. There was an altercation between the two until their voices became loud ... there came to her ('A'isha) Abu Bakr (her father), and spoke to her in stern words and said: 'Do you behave like this?'**" Additionally, another hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Hisham reports on the authority of his father that 'A'isha (RA) used to say: "**Does**

the woman not feel shy of offering herself to a man?' Then Allah the Exalted and Glorious revealed this verse: 'You may defer any of them you wish and take to yourself any you wish.' I ('A'isha said): 'It seems to me that your Lord hastens to satisfy your (the Prophet's) desire.'"

In light of the above mentioned information, it is important to note that whenever a husband has more than one wife he can expect jealousy to ensue among them from time to time. As such, he should be patient with them and considerate of their nature; because, Surah Al-Nisa (4:129) of the Quran clearly says: "**You are never able to be fair and just as between women, even if it is your ardent desire: But turn not away (from a woman) altogether, so as to leave her (as it were) hanging (in the air). If ye come to a friendly understanding, and practice self-restraint, Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.**" What is more, Abu Hurayra (RA) narrated in a hadith of Imam Muslim that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "**A believing man should not despise a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.**" Likewise, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Mu'awiya ibn Hayda states: "**I asked the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) what is the right of someone's wife over him? He said, 'That you feed her when you eat and clothe her when you**

clothe yourself and do not strike her face. Do not malign her and do not keep apart from her, except in the house.'" What is more, the wives should also be patient and considerate towards their husband; because, according to a hadith of Abu Hurayra in the collection of Tirmidhi, the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**The most perfect of believers are those most perfect of character; and the best of you are the best of you to your spouses**."

Lastly, at all cost, a wife should avoid being vindictive and refuse to have sexual intercourse with her husband. The evidence for this admonition is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abu Huraira (RA) narrated that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**When a man invites his wife to his bed and she does not come, and he (the husband) spends the night being angry with her, the angels curse her until morning**." The importance of sex is so important in a relationship that a wife cannot fast voluntarily without her husband's permission. This fact is evident from the narration of Abu Huraira that was collected in a hadith of Bukhari which reports that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) allegedly said: "**A woman should not fast (optional fasts) except with her husband's permission if he is at home (staying with her)**."

IX. The bride and the groom should conduct a Walima (wedding reception banquet) after consummating the marriage in order to announce their union to the public:

It is strongly recommended that the bride and groom publicly announce their marriage in order to prevent unnecessary suspicion or rumors from circulating among those people whom might see them together; i.e., unaware that they are a married couple. The evidence for this instruction is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ali bin Husain narrated: **"Safiya bint Huyai came to the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), and when she returned (home), the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) accompanied her. It happened that two men from the Ansar passed by them and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) called them saying, 'She is (my wife) Safiyya!' Those two men said, 'Subhan Allah (May Allah forgive them; they did not suspect any lewdness)!' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Satan circulates in the human body as blood does.'"**

With this being said, conducting a walima serves as the ideal method for conveniently announcing a couple's marriage. The couple in question should therefore have a simple wedding banquet in which their family and friends are invited; even if they can only afford provide a small amount of foodstuff. The evidence for performing a walima with simple food is the hadith

of Bukhari wherein Anas ibn Malik (RA) narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) saw a yellow mark on Abdur Rahman ibn Awf and said: 'What's this?' He replied: 'I have married a woman with the dowry being gold to the weight of a date-stone.' The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'May Allah bless you (in your marriage), perform a Walima, even if it is only with a goat.'**"

The typical food dishes to serve at the walima

It is important to note that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) actually performed a walima for some of his marriages with a sheep and some bread or with two Mudd (1/2 Sa'a or two scoops gathered with both hands cupped together) of grain. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Thabit narrated from Anas who reportedly said: "**I did not see the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) host a banquet for any of his wives as the walima done for Zainab Bint Jahsh (RA). He gave a banquet for her with one sheep.**" Bukhari also collected another hadith from Anas (RA) wherein he reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) provided a walima on the occasion of the consummation of his marriage with Zaynab bint Jahsh. He provided meat and bread to the fill off his guests.**"

Further evidence for the food served at the walima of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and his wives (RA) is found in

another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated from Safiya Bint Shaiba which reads: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) gave a banquet for some of his wives with two Mudd of barley**." Furthermore, it is also narrated in a hadith from Abu Dawud that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) also offered Hays (a type of sweat-dish cooked with dates, cheese & butter) on the occasion of his marriage with Safiyya (RA). The hadith in question that was narrated on the authority of Anas reads as follows: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) stayed for three days at a place between Khaibar and Medina, and there he consummated his marriage with Safiyya bint Huyay (RA). I invited the Muslims to a banquet which included neither meat nor bread. The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) ordered for the leather dining sheets to be spread, and then dates, dried yogurt and butter were provided over it, and that was the Walima (banquet) of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.). The Muslims asked whether Safiyya would be considered as his wife or as a slave girl of what his right hands possessed. Then they said, 'If the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) screens her from the people, then she is the Messenger of Allah 's (P.B.U.H.) wife, but if he does not screen her, then she is a slave girl.' So when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) proceeded, he made a place for her (on the camel) behind him and screened her from the people.'"**

The ideal time for conducting the walima

The actual walima can either occur at the time of the marriage contract when the marriage becomes valid, after the wedding and prior to consummating the marriage, or after consummating the actual marriage. However, the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that the ideal time for conducting the walima is after the marriage has been consummated. This fact is evident from the hadith of Bukhari wherein Anas ibn Malik (RA) narrated: "**I was a boy of ten when the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) migrated to Medina. My mother and aunts used to urge me to serve the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) regularly, thus I served him for ten years. When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) passed away, I was twenty years old, and I knew about the order of Hijab more than anyone else, when it was revealed. It was revealed for the first time when the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) had consummated his marriage with Zainab bint Jahsh (RA). The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) in the morning was a bridegroom, and he invited the people to a banquet (walima). So they came, ate, and then all left except a few who remained with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.h.) for a long time...**"

It is also important to note that the actual walima should not be held for more than two consecutive days, in order to comply with the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). This fact is

evident from the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Zubayr ibn Uthman reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'The wedding feast on the first day is a duty, that on the second is a good practice, but that on the third day is to make men hear of it and show it to them. Qatadah said: 'A man told me that Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab was invited (to a wedding feast on the first day and he accepted it. He was again invited on the second day, and he accepted. When he was invited on the third day, he did not accept; he said: They are the people who make men hear of it and show off to them.'**" However, some scholars maintain that if there is a genuine need to delay the walima, such as not being able to invite everyone on the first day or two, there is no harm in inviting people on those days which are more convenient.

Who should be invited to the walima

While on the subject of showing off with regard to the walima, it is extremely distasteful to only invite rich people or those from the upper-class of the society. One's relatives and friends, regardless of their educational level or social status should be invited. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Abu Huraira (RA) reported a directive which he heard from the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) who allegedly said: "**The worst food is that of a wedding banquet (walima) to which only the rich are invited while the poor are**

not invited. And he who refuses an invitation (to a banquet) disobeys Allah and His Messenger (P.B.U.H.)." With this being said, it is therefore recommended that the married couple invite their neighbors, relatives, friends, associates, scholars, and pious people. Furthermore, it is strongly encouraged that all invited parties honor the invitation of the couple and attend their walima. This fact is evident from the Hadith of Bukhari wherein Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'If one of you is invited to a wedding banquet (walima), then he must accept the invitation**.'" What is more, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Nafil (RA) reports: "**I heard Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) narrating that Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Accept the feast when you are invited to it.' Thus, Abdullah ibn Umar used to come to the feast, whether it was a wedding feast or other than that, and he would come there even in the state of fasting (attend the walima even if you do not plan to eat or drink anything)**.'"

Lastly, a hadith from Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abu Hurayra (RA) reports: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'If one of you is invited to a Walima, let him accept. If he is fasting, let him pray (make duah)...**'" Therefore, in light of the above mentioned narrations, many scholars regard the

acceptance of a walima invitation to be binding; and one will be deemed sinful for refusing to attend.

The basic structure of the walima

The walima should be conducted in the simplest manner possible. This fact is evident from the report of Bayhaqi wherein Aisha (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: "**The most blessed marriage (nikah) is the one with the least expenses**." Furthermore, the Quran provides the strongest evidence on this issue when it says in Surah Al-Furqan (25:67) which reads: "**Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)**." In essence, the simpler the structure of the walima, the better it is in the eyes of Allah; because, the objective is to offer foodstuff the guests as a sincere gesture of appreciation for their attendance.

Performing Salatul-Istikharah (istikhara)

With regard to performing a sincere prayer of istikhara to Allah, it is important to note that istikhara means to seek goodness from Allah; thus, when one intends to perform an important task, it is strongly encouraged that they perform a

sincere prayer of istikhara. In essence, the Muslim who performs a sincere prayer of istikhara is actually requesting Allah Almighty, the Knower of the unseen to guide them in the endeavor if it will benefit them in this life and the next and to protect them from it if it will not.

The evidence for performing a sincere prayer of istikhara prior to engaging in a task is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir ibn 'Abd-Allah al-Salami reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to teach his companions to make istikhaarah in all things, just as he used to teach them Surahs of the Quran. He said: 'If any one of you is concerned about a decision he has to make, then let him pray two rakahs of non-obligatory prayer, then say: Allaahumma inni astakheeruka bi 'ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika wa as'aluka min fadlika, fa innaka taqdiru wa laa aqdir, wa ta'lamu wa laa a'lam, wa anta 'allaam al-ghuyoob. Allaahumma fa in kunta ta'lamu haadha'l-amra (then the matter should be specifically mentioned) khayran li fi 'aajil amri wa aajilihi (or: fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri) faqdurhu li wa yassirhu li thumma baarik li fihi. Allaahumma wa in kunta ta'lamu annahu sharrun li fi deeni wa ma'aashi wa 'aaqibati amri (or: fi 'aajili amri wa aajilihi) fasrifni 'anhu [wasrafhu 'anni] waqdur li al-khayr haythu kaana thumma radini bihi (O Allaah, I seek Your guidance [in making a**

choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power, I have none. And You know, I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things. O Allah, if in Your knowledge, this matter (then it should be mentioned by name) is good for me both in this world and in the Hereafter (or: in my religion, my livelihood and my affairs), then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge it is bad for me and for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs (or: for me both in this world and the next), then turn me away from it, [and turn it away from me], and ordain for me the good wherever it may be and make me pleased with it.'"

Lastly, it is important to note that after one has performed a sincere prayer of istikhara, it is not necessary to repeat the prayer if it was in fact performed sincerely. One has to trust in Allah! If one does not obtain what they desired after performing a sincere prayer of istikhara they should be content; because, Allah has chosen to protect them from it.

The prerequisites which must be met before one can perform the istikhara prayer:

The manner in which a sincere prayer of istikhara is performed is similar to that of any two rakah sunnah prayer, as

with the two rakahs performed before Fajr salat; however, after performing the tashahhud and before saying the taslim, one should at that time sincerely perform the istikhara by asking Allah to guide them in the endeavor if it will benefit them in this life and the next and to protect them from it if it will not.

Make the Niyyah (intention) to make salat: The proof for this practice is the hadith of Imam Muslim, wherein the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said, "**Verily the actions are by intention and there is for everyone only what he intended...**"

Sutra: The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Ahmad wherein Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "**When one of you prays, he should place something in front of him...**" Also, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud narrated by Abū Sa'īd Al-Khudrī reports: "**Allāh's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When you do your Salāt, do it towards a Sutrah and come close to it. And never let any one pass between you and your Sutra, even if you have to fight him for the Devil is with him.**'" What is more, whenever possible, the object that one uses as a sutra should be at least equal to the size of a camel's saddle (about 12 inches high - give or take a few inches):

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Musa b. Talha reported on the authority of his father: "**We used to say prayer and the animals moved in front of us. We mentioned it to the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and he said: 'If anything equal to the back of a saddle is in front of you, then what walks in front, no harm would come to him. Ibn Numair said: No harm would come whosoever walks in front.'**"

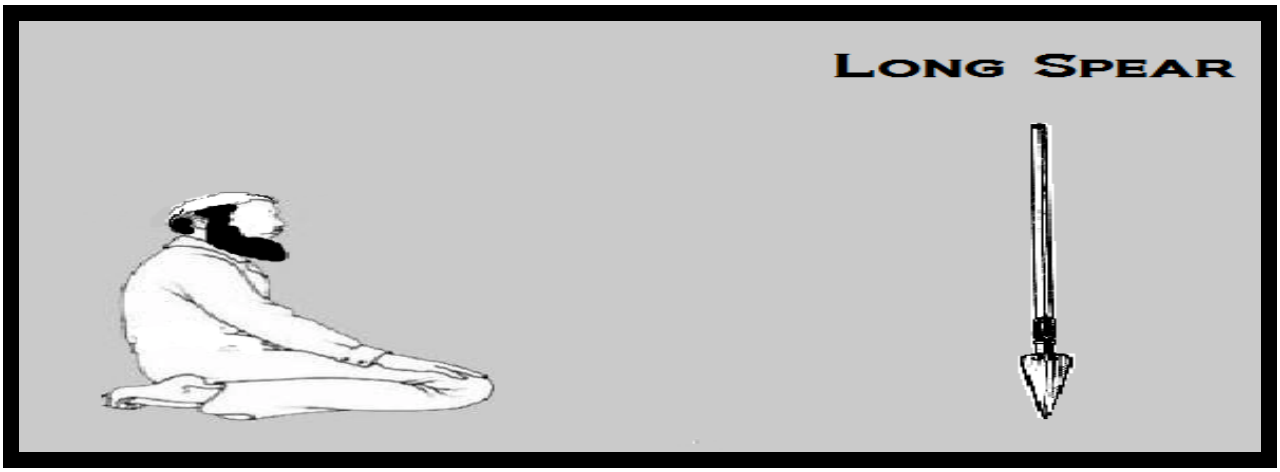
The Imam, the Imam's sutra, or the row of Muslims performing congregational salat in front of an individual is also sufficient as a sutra. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Ibn Umar reported: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) went out on**

the 'Id day, he ordered to carry a spear-and it was fixed in front of him (sutra for the Imam), and he said prayer towards its (direction), and the people were behind him (he served as their sutra). And he did it in the journey, and that is the reason why the Amirs carried it."

A spear (short or long) is sufficient for a sutra:

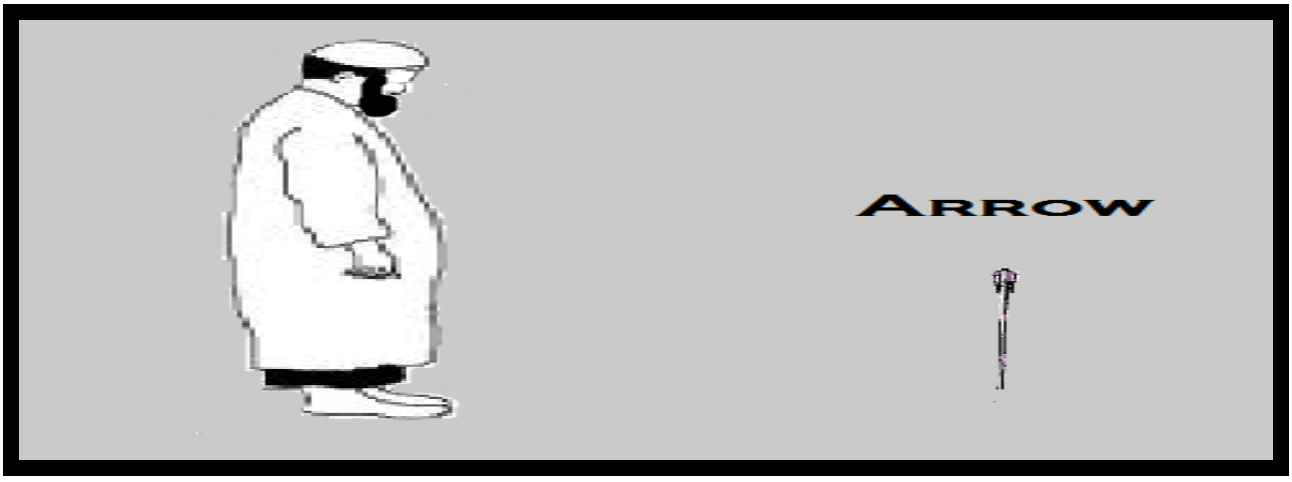
The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from 'Awn ibn Abi Juhayfa who

reportedly said: "**I heard my father say, 'The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) came out to us at midday and was brought wudu' water and did wudu'. Then he led us in the Dhuhr and 'Asr prayers with a short spear in set up front of him. Women and donkeys were passing behind it.'**"



The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein It is related from 'Abdullah: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to have a spear set up for him and would pray facing it.**"

The use of an arrow as a sutra:



The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Ahmad wherein It is related from Sabrah ibn Mu'abid who reported: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: 'When one of you prays, he should make a partition for his salah, even if it is an arrow.'**"

The use of a bed as a sutra:

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from Aiesha: "**...The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would come and pray facing the middle of the bed...**."

The use of a pillar as a sutra:

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from 'Umar who said: "**Those who**

are praying are more entitled to the pillars than those conversing." 'Umar saw a man praying between two pillars and moved him up to a pillar and said, "Pray towards it."

Furthermore, it is related in another hadith collected by Bukhari that Yazid ibn 'Ubayd said: **"I used to come with Salama ibn al-Akwa' and he would pray behind the pillar where the Qur'an was kept. I said, 'Abu Muslim, I see that you are keen to pray by this pillar.' He said, 'I saw that the Prophet(P.B.U.H.) was keen to pray there.'"**

The use of a camel as a sutra:

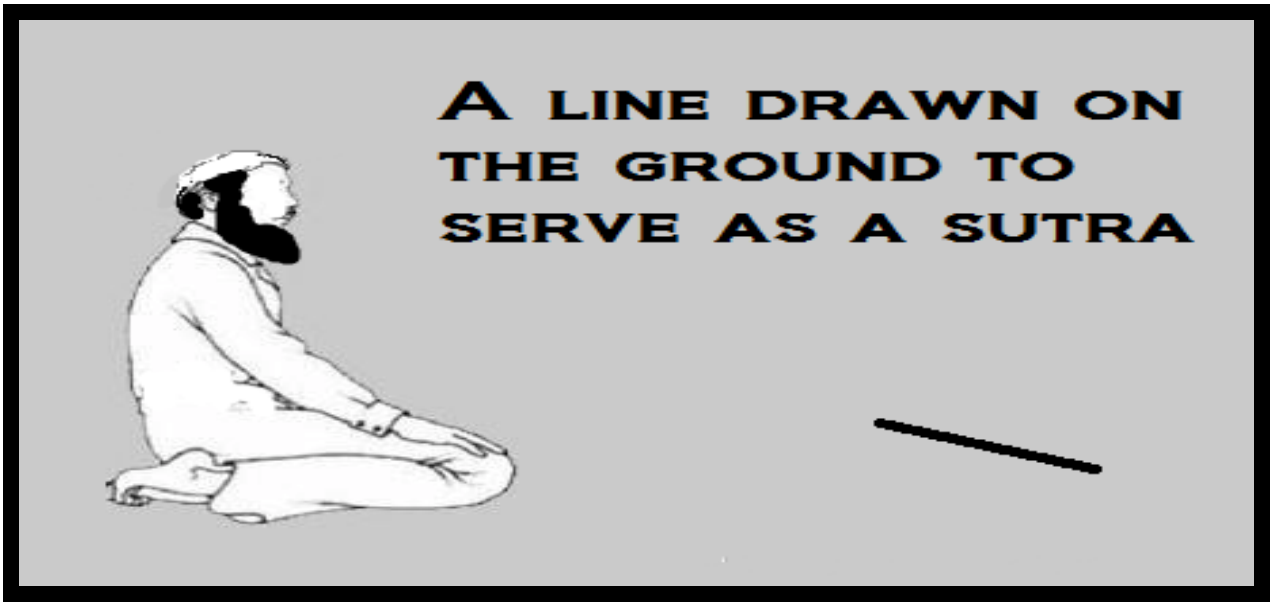
The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from Nafi: **"I saw Ibn 'Umar praying while taking his camel as a Sutra in front of him and he said, 'I saw the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) doing the same.'"**

The use of a bed as a sutra with someone asleep atop of it (even if they are menstruating):

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from 'A'isha who reportedly said: **"Do you equate us with dogs and donkeys? I once found myself lying on the bed when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) came and faced the middle of the bed and started praying. I disliked being in front of him, so I eased myself down towards the foot of the bed until I had slipped out from under my bedcover."**

Furthermore, in a hadith collected by Bukhari it is related that Maymuna reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to pray with me sleeping beside him. When he prostrated, his garment touched me and I was menstruating**."

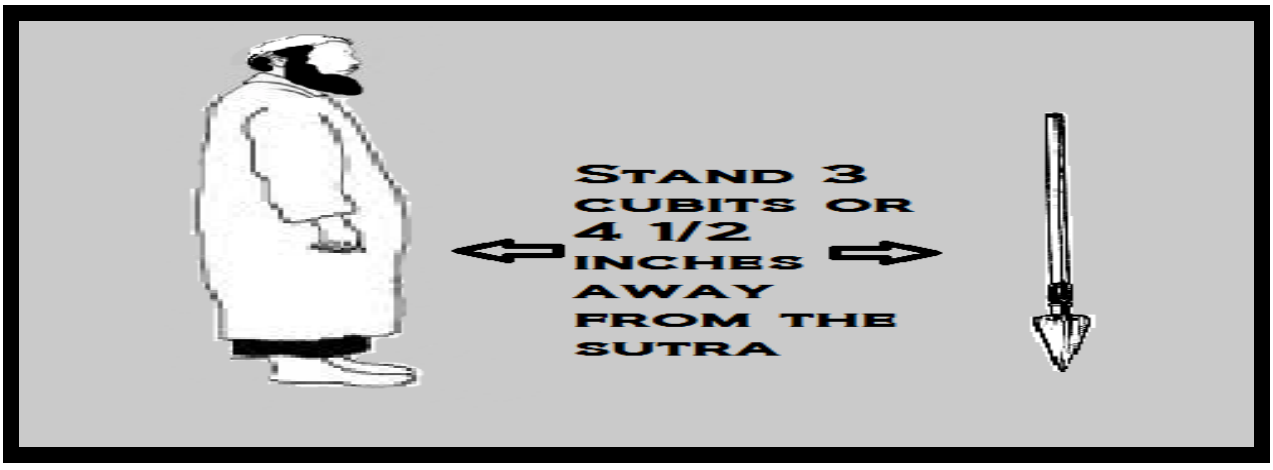
The use of a line on the ground as a sutra:



The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Hurairah related that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "**When one of you prays, he should place something in front of him. If he cannot find anything, he should prop up his staff (in front of him). If he does not have a staff, he should draw a line (on the ground in front of him), then nothing that passes in front of him will harm him.**"

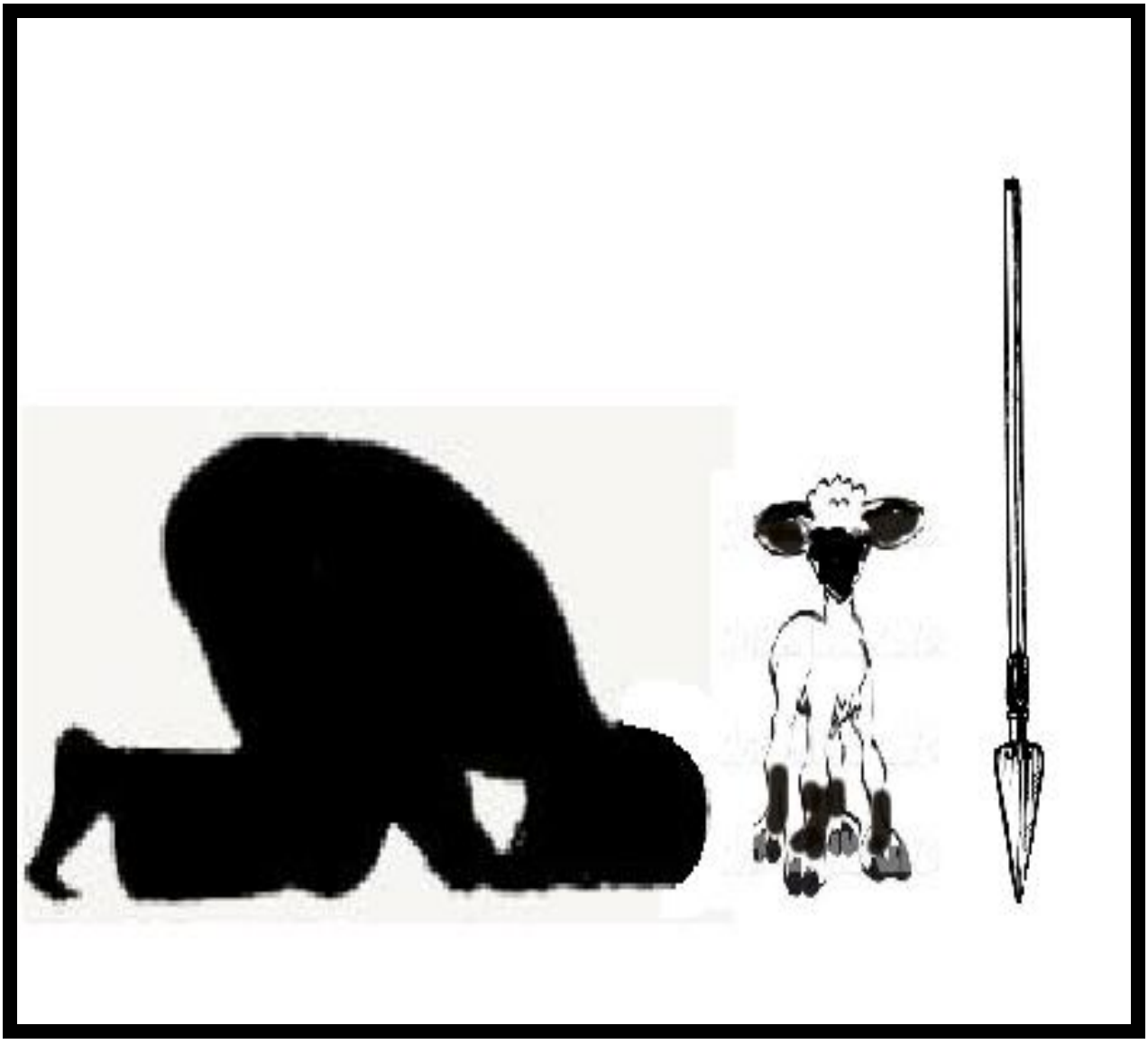
The preferred distance between the person intending to perform salat and their sutra:

The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein it is related from Nafi': "**Whenever 'Abdullah entered the Kaaba, he would walk straight ahead with the door directly behind him. He walked on until there was about three cubits (54 inches or 4 1/2 feet) between him and the wall in front of him where he prayed, seeking the place where Bilal told him that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had prayed. He said, 'There is no harm in anyone praying in any part of the House he likes.'**"

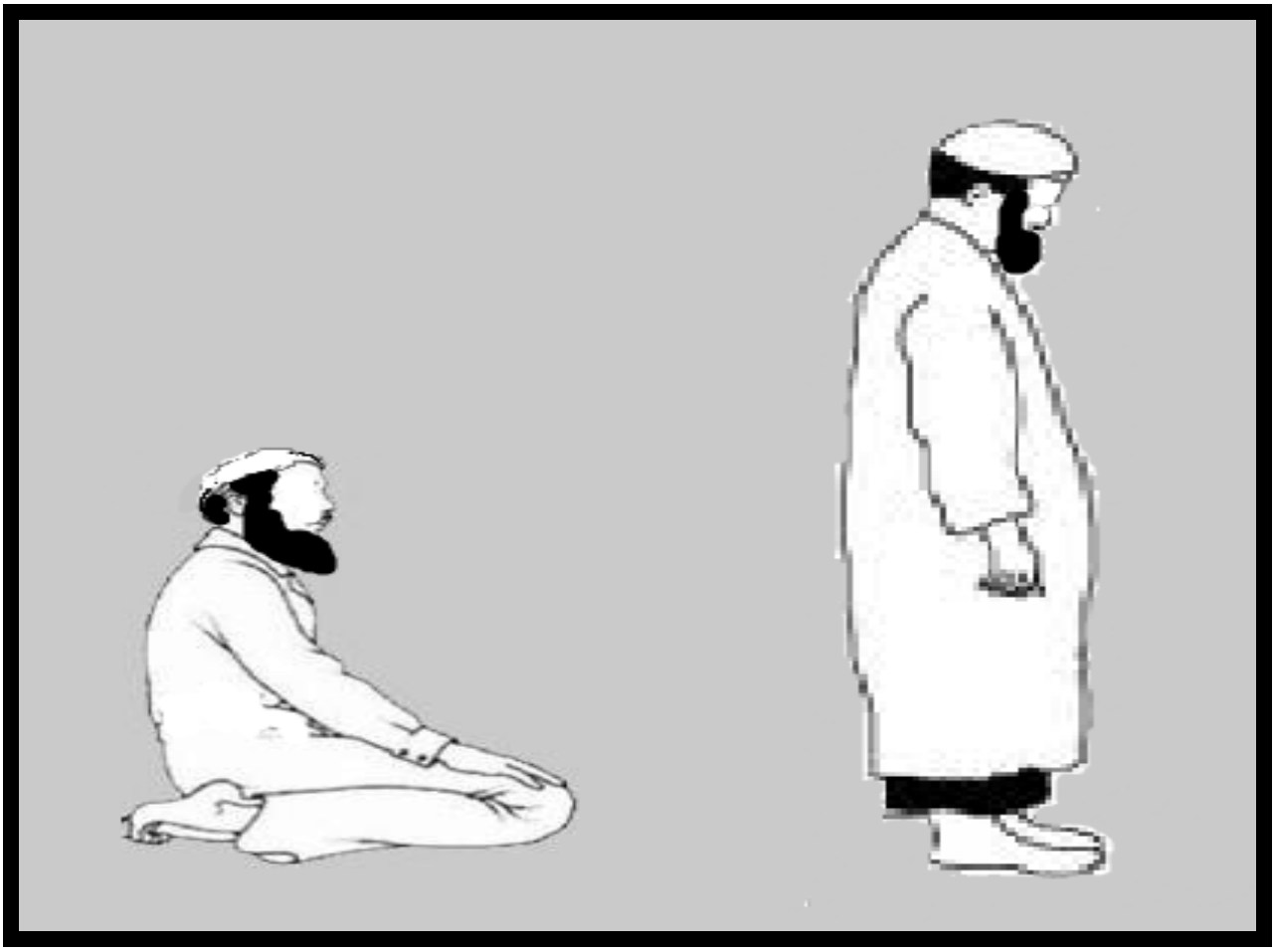


The distance the sutra should be from the place of prostration (where the forehead of the person performing salat comes into contact with the ground surface):

It is related in a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Sahl reportedly said: "**Between the place where the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prayed and the wall (sutra), there was room for a sheep to walk past** (about 18 - 24 inches)."

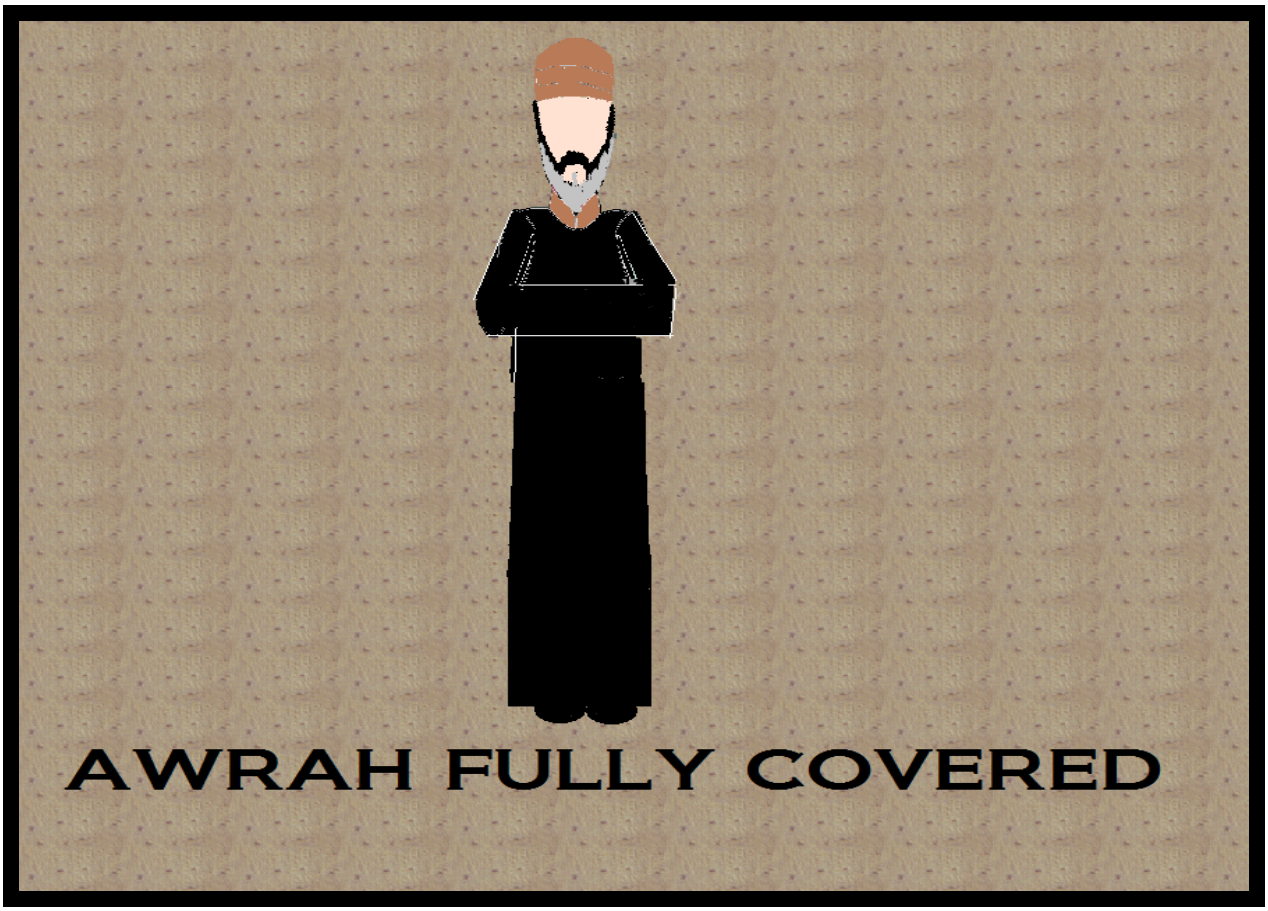


The adequate distance one should stand away from another's sutra in a Masjid, and the etiquette of one intending to make sunnah (voluntary/supererogatory) salat to find a location wherein others will not violate their sutra by walking in front of them:



The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein 'Uthman reportedly said: **"I disliked facing another man when he was praying if that distracted him. However, if he is not distracted by it, Zayd ibn Thabit said, 'It does not matter. The man does not invalidate the other man's prayer.'"**

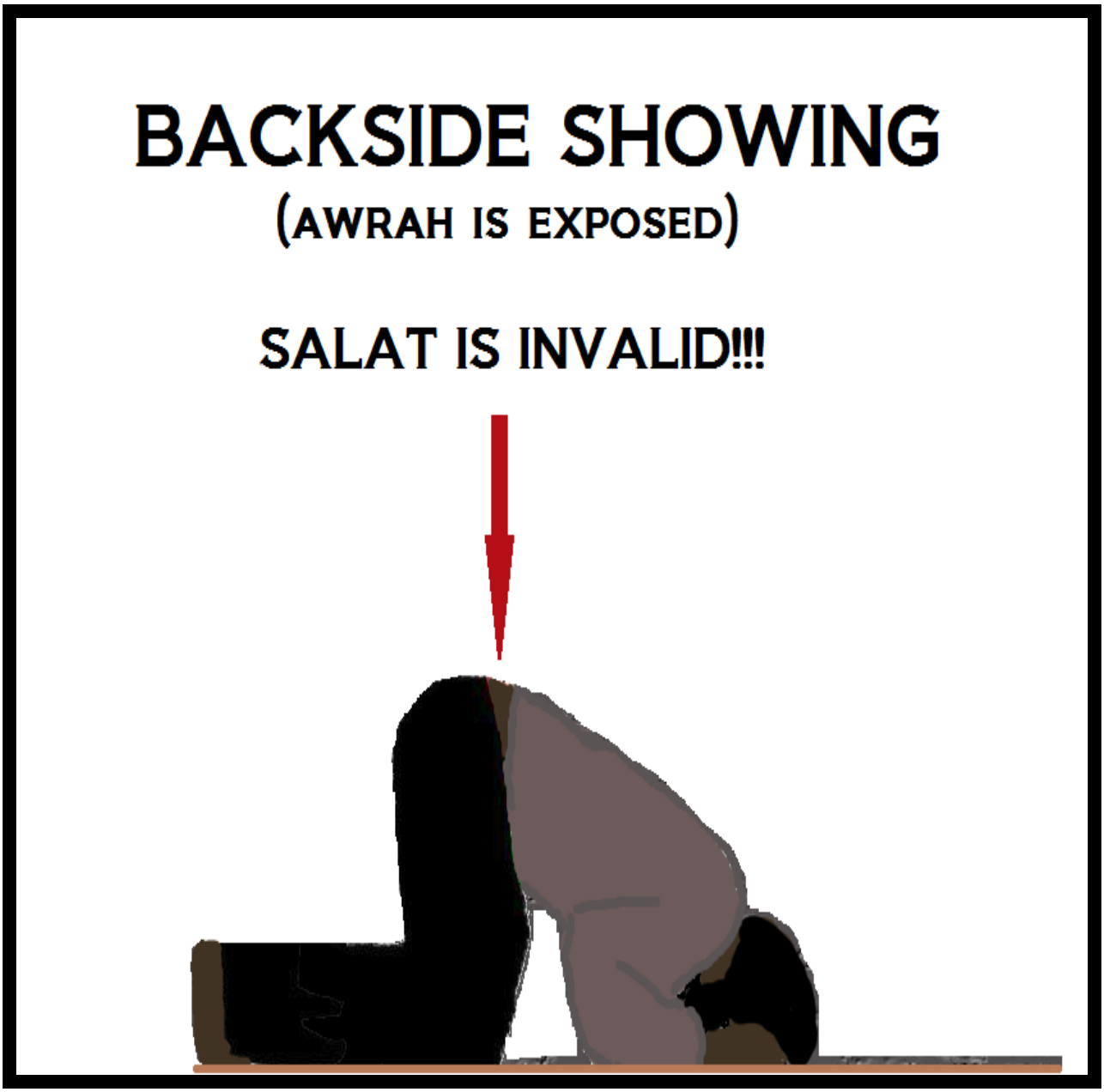
Awrah: It is a prerequisite of salat for a Muslim to cover their awrah; which includes the area between the navel and the knees for a man and the entire body, except the face and hands for a woman.



The evidence for this ruling is found in Surah Al-Araf (7:31) of the Quran which reads: " **O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer...**" Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri declares: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'No man should look at the awrah of another man and no**

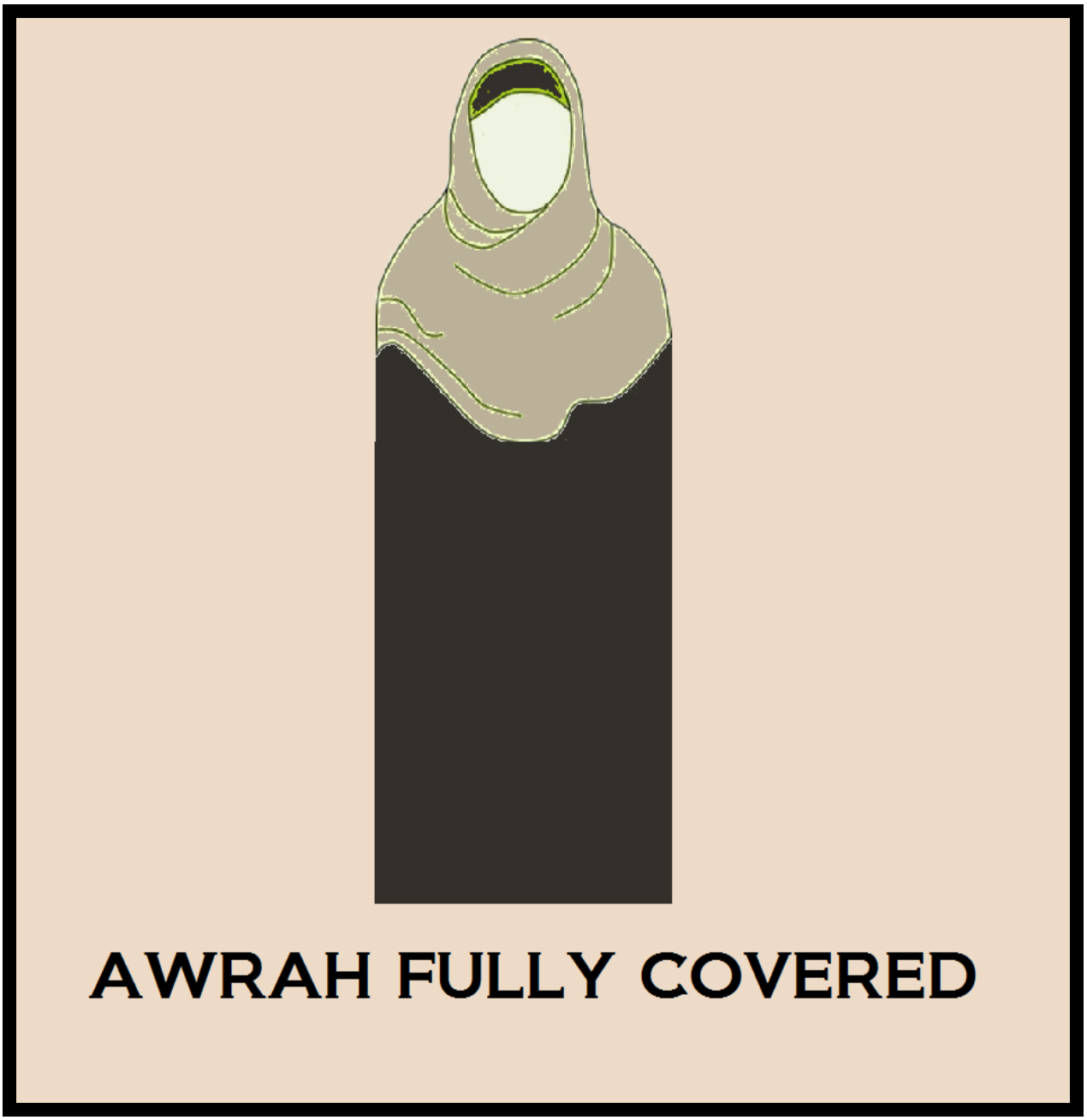
woman should look at the awrah of another woman. No man should be with another man under one cover and no woman should be with another woman under one cover.'" Thus, indicating that the garment being worn must cover the entire awrah.

Regarding what constitutes the awrah of a man, a hadith of Ahmad reports: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'What is between navel and knee is Awrah.**'" Thus indicating that the male garment must at least cover the area between the navel and knees. This fact is further supported by a hadith of Bukhari wherein Said bin Al Harith narrated: "**I asked Jabir bin 'Abdullah about praying in a single garment. He said, 'I traveled with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) during some of his journeys, and I came to him at night for some purpose and I found him praying. At that time, I was wearing a single garment with which I covered my shoulders and prayed by his side. When he finished the prayer, he asked, 'O Jabir! What has brought you here?' I told him what I wanted. When I finished, he asked, 'O Jabir! What is this garment which I have seen and with which you covered your shoulders?' I replied, 'It is a (tight) garment.' He said, 'If the garment is large enough, wrap it round the body (covering the shoulders) and if it is tight (too short) then use it as an Izar (to be tied around one's waist, which hangs down below the knees).**'"



Regarding the awrah of a woman, the Quran in Suran Al-Ahzab (33:59) reads **"O Prophet! Tell thy wives and daughters, and the believing women, that they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad): that is most convenient, that they should be known (as such) and not molested. And Allah is Oft-**

Forgiving, Most Merciful." More explicit details are also found in a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud wherein Aisha, declared: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who has reached puberty unless she wears a khimar (headscarf covering the hair, ears neck and bosom)**."



Furthermore, another hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Aisha serves as evidence that only the face and hands are permitted to be exposed. The hadith in question maintains: "**Asma, daughter of AbuBakr, entered upon the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) wearing thin clothes. The Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H.) turned his attention from her. He said: 'O Asma, when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it is not fitting that any part of her should be seen except this,' and he pointed to her face and hands**.'"

Thus, it becomes clear that the awrah of a woman consists of everything except her face and hands. It is also important to note that the garments covering the awrah must not be form-fitting or transparent. These points are verified by the following hadith: Abu Hurayrah reported in a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "**There are two types of people of Hell that I have never seen; people with whips like the tails of cattle, with which they strike the people, and women who are dressed but appear naked, walking with an enticing gait, with their heads looking like the humps of camels, leaning to one side. They will never enter Paradise, nor even smell its fragrance, although its fragrance can be discerned from such and such a distance**."

The method of performing a sincere prayer of istikhara regarding an important endeavor:

STEP 1: Takbir Tahrima (Takbiratul Ihram)

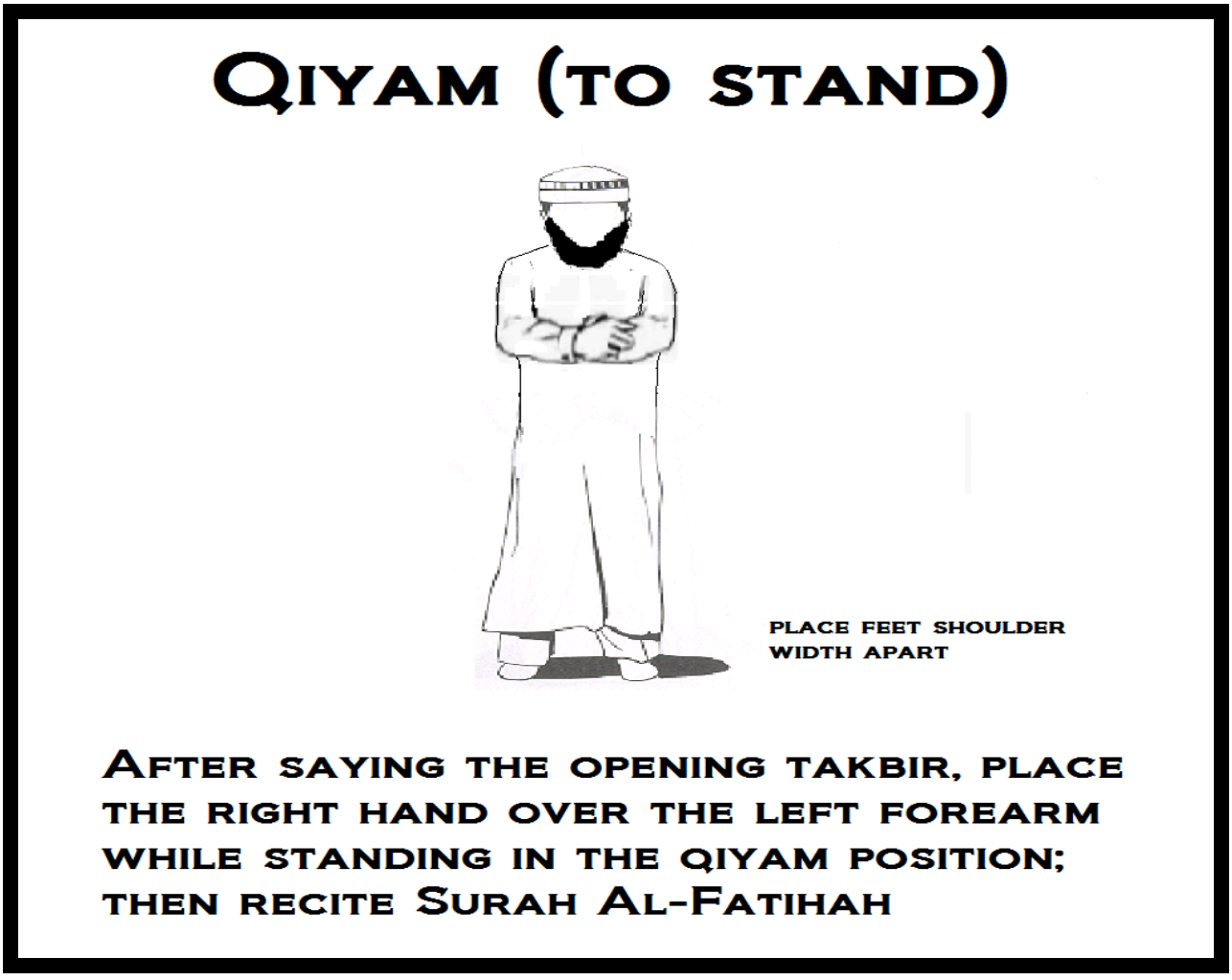
BEGIN BY RAISING THE HANDS UP TO THE SHOULDERS AND SAY "ALLAHU AKBAR" IN THE OPENING TAKBIR OF THE ISTIKHARA PRAYER

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ

The hands of one performing salatul-istikhara are to be raised to the shoulders with the first takbir. (In some instances the fingers appear as if they are near to the height

of the ears) The proof for this practice is the hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Muhammad bin Amr bin Ata narrated: **"I was sitting with some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah's (P.B.U.H.) and we were discussing the way in which the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) made salat. Abu Humaid As-Saidi said, 'I remember the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you.... I saw him raising both his hands up to the level of the shoulders on saying the Takbir...'"**

STEP 2: Qiyam (to stand)


QIYAM (TO STAND)
PLACE FEET SHOULDER WIDTH APART
AFTER SAYING THE OPENING TAKBIR, PLACE THE RIGHT HAND OVER THE LEFT FOREARM WHILE STANDING IN THE QIYAM POSITION; THEN RECITE SURAH AL-FATIHAH

Immediately after reciting the first takbir, a Muslim performing salatul-istikhara should engage in the qiyam position by folding their arms with the palm of the right hand being placed over the left forearm, in an area ranging from either directly on the chest or slightly below the navel. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Sahl bin Sa'd narrated: "**The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in the prayer. Abu Hazim said, 'I knew that the order was from the Prophet.**'" Furthermore, in a hadith collected by Abu Dawud, Tawus reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to place his right hand on his left hand, then he folded them strictly on his chest in prayer**." However, another narration in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated by Abu Hurayrah reports: "**(The established way of folding the hands is) to hold the hands by the hands (right holding left) in prayer below the navel**." Therefore, in order to avoid engaging into petty bickering over which method is ideal, one can merely comply with the directive in Surah Al-Fatihah of the Quran and follow the siratul mustaqim (the straight path; i.e., the middle course), by placing the right hand over the left forearm which will basically force one's hands to be positioned in an area below the chest and above the navel.

It is also important to note that in a hadith collected by Abu Dawud, Abu Hurairah reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prohibited putting one's hands on the hips during the salah**." With this being said, it is important to note that the late Imam Malik (RA) who was documented as having prayed with his hands down by his hips, did so as a result of injuries which prevented him from folding his arms during the salat.

After entering the qiyam position, it is recommended that the Muslim performing salatul-istikhara should silently seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan, and then recite the sana (thana); followed by the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah of the Quran. The proof for these instructions is found in the hadith of Bukhari which declares, "**The only thing which should be read prior to the Fatihah is the 'Refuge' and the 'bismiallah**.'"

Sana (thana):

This act of worship is accomplished by silently saying: "Subhana kallahumma wa bi hamdika wa tabarakasmuka wa ta'ala jadduka wa la ilaha ghairuka (Glory to You, O Allah, and to You is the praise, and blessed is Your name, and exalted is Your majesty, and there is none to be worshipped besides You)."

سبحانك اللهم و بحمدك، وتبارك اسمك، و تعالى جدك، ولا إله غيرك

The proof for this practice is the hadith of Imam Muslim,

wherein 'Abda narrated: "**Umar b. al-Khattab used to recite loudly (loudly only for demonstration purposes) these words: Subhanak Allahumma wa bi hamdika wa tabarakasmuka wa ta'ala jadduka wa la ilaha ghairuka (Glory to Thee, O Allah, and Thine is the Praise, and Blessed is Thy name and Exalted is Thy Majesty and there is no other object of worship beside Thee)...**"

It is also worth mentioning that another supplication is recorded in a hadith collected by Bukhari, Abu Huraira reportedly said: "**Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to keep silent between the Takbir and the recitation of Qur'an (before Al-Fatihah of the first rakah) and that interval of silence used to be a short one. I said to the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) 'May my parents be sacrificed for you! What do you say in the pause between Takbir and the recitation?' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'I say, 'Allahumma, ba'id baini wa baina khatayaya kama ba'adta baina-l-mashriqi wa-l-maghrib. Allahumma, naqqim min khatayaya kama yunaqqa-ththawbu-l-abyadu mina-ddanas. Allahumma, ighsil khatayaya bil-ma'i wa-th-thalji wal-barad (This translates into English as: "O Allah! Set me apart from my sins (faults) as the East and West are set apart from each other and clean me from sins as a white garment is cleaned of dirt (after thorough washing). O Allah! Wash off my sins with water, snow and hail").'**"

Ta`awwudh (Seek refuge):

This act of worship is accomplished by silently saying: A'oodhu billahi minash-shaitanir-rajim (I seek refuge in Allah from Shaitan, the accursed one).

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

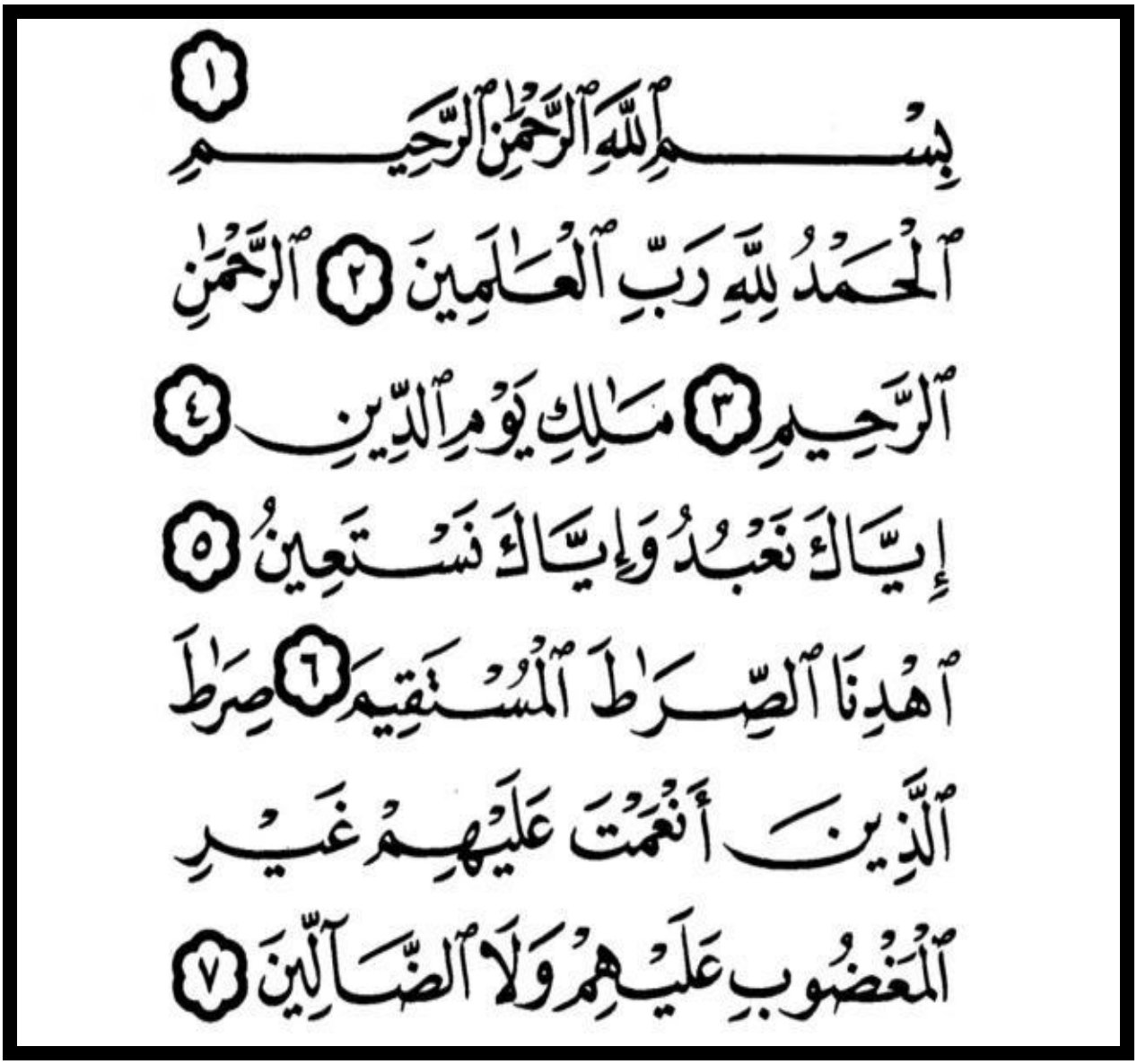
The proof for this practice is Surah Al-Nahl (16:98) of the Quran which reads: "**Fa-izaa qara'-tal-Qur-'aana fasta-'iz billaahi minash-Shaytanir-rajeem** (So when you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan)."

Al-Basmallah:

Begin the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah by saying the Arabic words "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim," which translates into English as "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful" either audibly or silently. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Anas reportedly said: "**I observed prayer along with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and with Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, but I never heard any one of them reciting Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim loudly**." However, the permissibility for reciting Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim audibly is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) commenced his**

salah with 'Bismillah ir Rahman ir Rahim' (In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful)."

Al-Fatihah:



The Arabic text reads: "**Bis-mil laa-hir rah-maa-nir ra-heem. Al-ham-du lil-laa-hi rab-bil `aa-la-meen. Ar-rah-maa nir-ra-heem. Maa-li-ki yaw-mid-deen. ee yaa-ka na `-bu-du wa ee yaa-ka nas-ta-`een. Ih di-nas si-raa-tal mus-ta-qeem Si-raa-tal la-**

zee-na an-`am-ta `a-lay-him, ghay-ril magh-doo-bi `a-lai-him wa-lad-daal-leen." This translates into English as: "In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the most merciful. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; the beneficent, the most merciful; master of the Day of Judgment; thee alone do we worship and thee alone do we beseech for help; guide us to the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors, not of those whom have earned your anger, nor of those who went astray)."

The evidence for reciting Surah Al-Fatihah in salat is the hadith Qudsi of Bukhari wherein Ubada bin As Samit narrated: Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, "**Whoever does not recite Al-Fatihah in his prayer, his prayer is invalid**." Further evidence is also found in the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**A prayer performed by someone who has not recited the Essence of the Quran (1) during it is deficient (and he repeated the word three times), incomplete. Someone said to Abu Hurayrah: [Even though] we are behind the imam? (2) He said: Recite it to yourself, for I have heard the Prophet (may the blessings and peace of Allah be up on him) say: Allah (mighty and sublime be He), had said: I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. When**

the servant says: Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi l-alamin (3), Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has praised Me. And when he says: Ar-rahmani r-rahim (4), Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has extolled Me, and when he says: Maliki yawmi d-din (5), Allah says: My servant has glorified Me - and on one occasion He said: My servant has submitted to My power. And when he says: Iyyaka na budu wa iyyaka nasta in (6), He says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. And when he says: Ihdina s-sirata l-mustaqim, siratal ladhina an amta alayhim ghayril-maghdubi alayhim wa la d-dallin (7), He says: This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.'"

Saying, "ameen" at the conclusion of Surah Al-Fatihah:

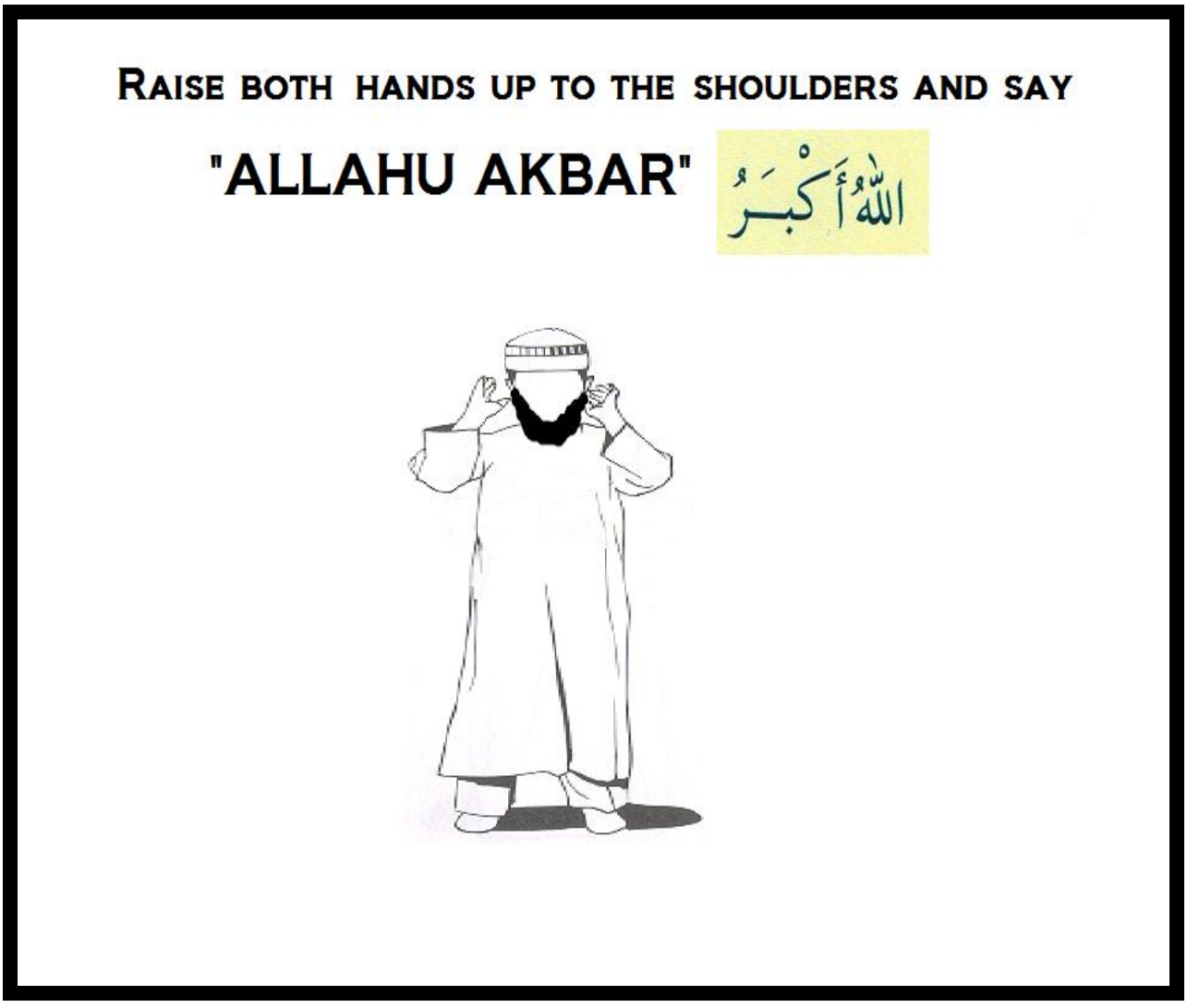
Lastly, after reciting surah Al-Fatihah, one should then say "ameen." (silently in a silent prayer and audibly in an audible prayer) The evidence for these ruling is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Alqama ibn Waeel narrated from his father: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) after reciting the words GHAIRIL MAGDUBI ALAIHIM WA LAD DALLIN, read AMEEN with a silent voice."** Also, in a hadith collected by Bukhari, Abu Huraira narrated: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When the Imam says: 'Ghair-il-Maghdubi 'Alaihim Walad-Dallin (i.e. not the path of those who earn Your Anger, nor the path of those who went**

astray, then you must say, 'ameen', for if one's utterance of 'ameen' coincides with that of the angels, then his past sins will be forgiven.'" However, it is important to note that the reciting of "ameen" should be elongated. The proof for this ruling is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Wail ibn Hujr narrated: "**Having heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) recite (in the salah the last verse of al-Fatihah) and say (Ameen), he prolonged his voice**."

SPECIAL NOTE: Keep the eyes fixated on the area where you intend to prostrate in order to avoid being distracted during salat. The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Anas bin Malik narrated: "The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'What is wrong with those people who look towards the sky during the prayer?' His talk grew stern while delivering this speech and he said, 'They should stop (looking towards the sky during the prayer); otherwise their eye-sight would be taken away.'" Also, in another hadith collected by Bukhari, 'Aisha narrated: "**I asked Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) about looking hither and thither in prayer. He replied, 'It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the prayer of a person**.'" What is more, according to Baihaqi and Hakim, "The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to incline his head during prayer and fix his sight towards the ground.

Lastly, it is important to note that it is extremely advantageous to avoid wearing clothing adorned with distractive patterns or decorating the masjid or musella in a manner that will divert one's attention from their salat. The evidence for these rulings is also found in a hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha narrated: "**Once the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) prayed on a Khamisa with marks on it and said, 'The marks on it diverted my attention..**'"

STEP 3: 2nd Takbir -(raf al-yadayn/raful yadayn)



After completing the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah in the qiyam position, the hands of the one performing salatul-istikhara are to again be raised to the shoulders after pronouncing a second takbir. The proof for the practice of raising one's hands to the shoulders while saying the second takbir is the hadith collected by Abu Dawud wherein Ali ibn AbuTalib narrated: **"When the Apostle of Allah (P.B.U.H) stood for offering the obligatory prayer, he uttered the takbir (Allah is most great) and raised his hands opposite to his shoulders; and he did like that when he finished recitation (of the Quran) and was about to bow..."** Further evidence is found in the hadith of Bukhari wherein Salim ibn 'Abdullah narrated from his father: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) used to raise his hands level with his shoulders when he began the prayer and when he said the takbir for ruku."**

STEP 4: Ruku (bowing with the palms of the hands resting on the knees)

After reciting the second takbir, the Muslim performing the prayer of istikhara should enter the ruku position by bowing in a manner which arcs the back into a 90 degree angle, and then rest the palm of the right hand securely on the right knee and the palm of the left hand securely on the left knee. While in

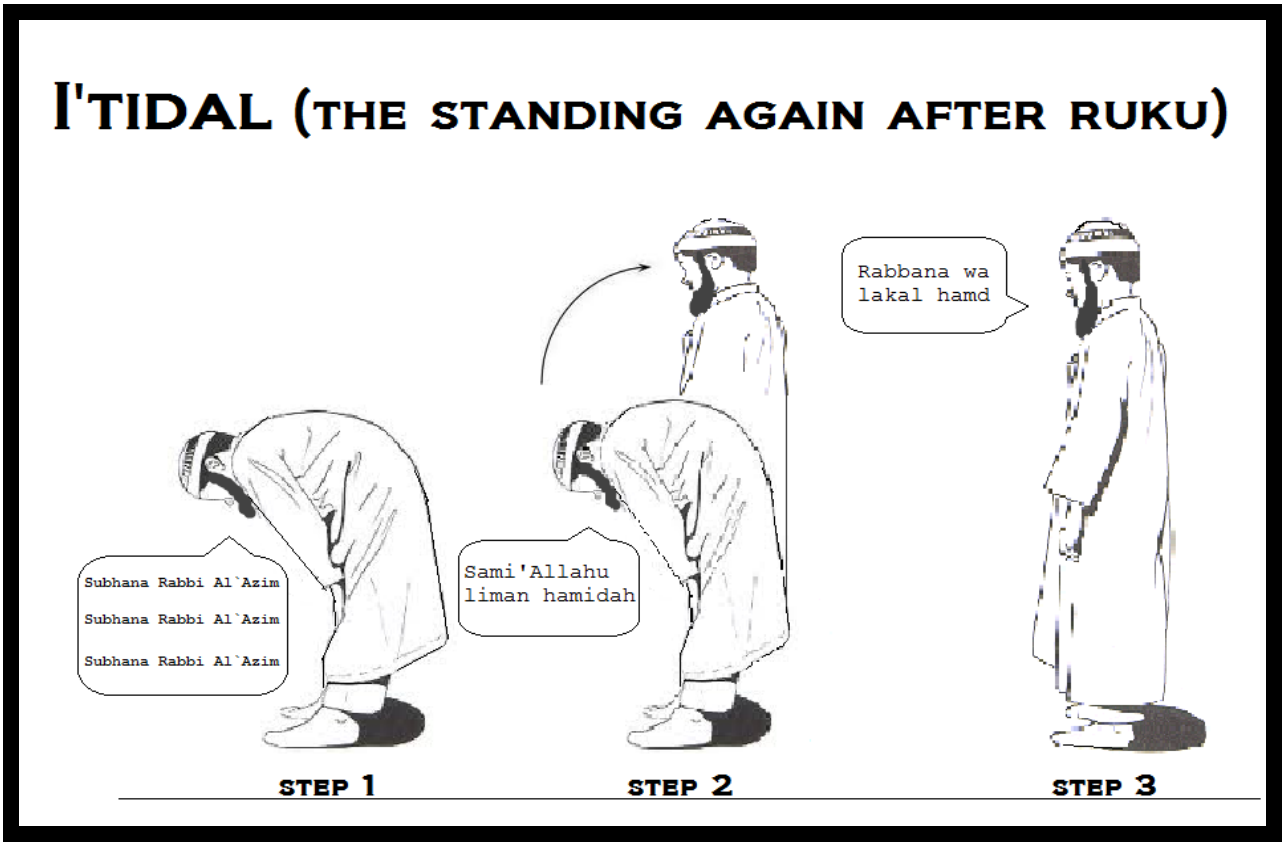
this position say, سبحان ربي العظيم - Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the great) three times.

AFTER SAYING THE TAKBIR AT THE END OF THE QIYAM POSITION, PROCEED TO THE RUKU POSITION BY BENDING OVER IN A 90 DEGREE ANGLE AND PLACE THE PALM OF THE RIGHT HAND OVER THE RIGHT KNEE AND THE PALM OF THE LEFT HAND OVER THE LEFT KNEE

The proof for the practice is the hadith of Ibn Majah wherein Ibn Masud reported: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'When anyone of you bows (ruku), let him say in his bowing: 'Subhana Rabbiyal-Azim (Glory is to my Lord, the Most Great)' three times; if he does that his bowing will be complete...**"

STEP 6: Qawma (the standing again after ruku) and observing I'tidal

Next, after saying سبحان ربي العظيم - Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the highest) three times, slowly straighten your back toward an upright position (qawma) while simultaneously saying, سمع الله لمن حمده - Sami'Allahu liman hamidah (Allah hears those who praise him), ربنا ولك الحمد - Rabbana wa lakal hamd (our Lord, all praise is for you)." Also, make sure that your back is completely straight after standing upright from the ruku to establish I'tidal.



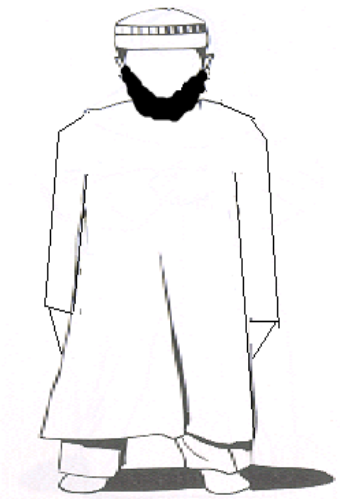
The evidence for this practice is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Hudhayfah narrated: **"I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.).....; He (P.B.U.H.) would bow (in ruku) and say: سبحان ربي العظيم 'Glory be to my Mighty Lord' (Subhanah Rabbi-al-Adheem)..."** Furthermore, a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira narrates: **"When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, سمع الله لمن حمده 'Sami' a-l-lahu Liman hamida,'(Allah heard those who praises Him), he would say, ربنا ولك الحمد 'rabbana wa-laka-l-hamd.'..."** Lastly, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari narrated by Abu Hurayra reports **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) entered the mosque and a man entered and prayed. He came and greeted the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who returned the greeting and said, 'Go back and pray. You have not prayed.' He (the man) prayed and came and greeted the Prophet P.B.U.H.) a second time, who again said three times, 'Go back and pray for you have not prayed.' He (the man) said, 'By the One who sent you with the truth, I cannot do any better than that, so teach me.' He (P.B.U.H.)said, 'When you stand for the prayer, say the takbir and then recite something you know well from the Qur'an and then do ruku' until you are at rest in your ruku. Then stand back up until you are completely upright..... Do that throughout all of your prayer.'"**

STEP 6: The 3rd Takbir after rising up from ruku

After completing the ruku phase of the salat by standing fully erect after saying ربنا ولك الحمد Rabbana wa lakal hamd (our Lord, all praise is for you), it is permissible to either raise both hands up to the shoulders during the takbir or simply leave them hanging down by the thighs prior to proceeding with the sujud position.

BEFORE ENTERING SAJDA, ONE HAS THE OPTION TO EITHER RAISE THEIR HANDS OR NOT WHEN SAYING THE TAKBIR:

"ALLAHU AKBAR" اللهُ أَكْبَرُ



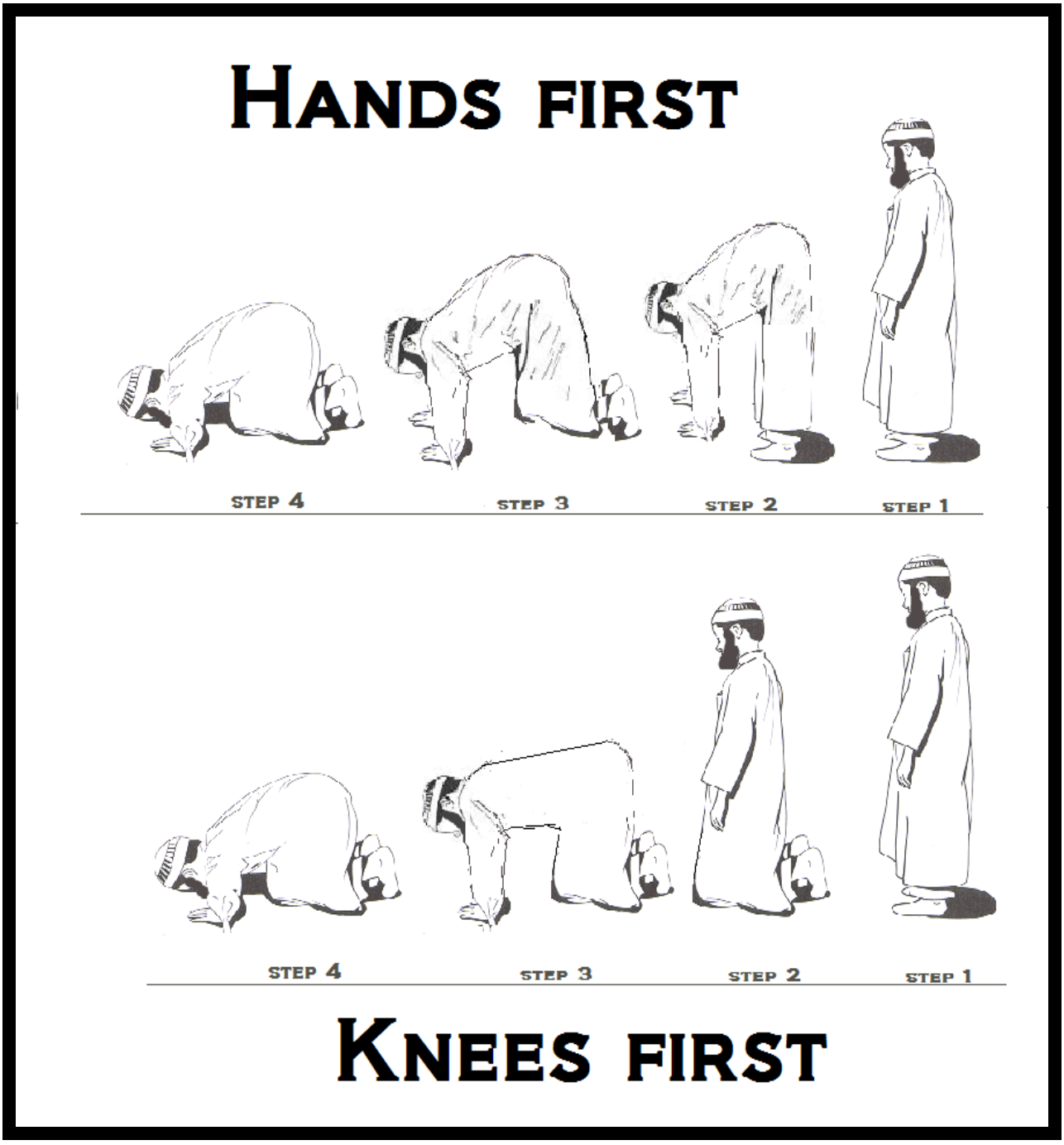
The evidence for this ruling is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Abu Humaid narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) came up (from ruku) and stood straight until every vertebra (of his Spinal Column) came back to its (natural) place**." Thus, implying that in order to fully straighten the spine upon rising from ruku, the entire body should be returned to its natural standing position; which involves the arms hanging down versus being folded; i.e., justifying why the arms and hands are hanging down in the first place. This is also the position of Shaykh Albani (RA), but Allah knows best!

Regarding the permissibility of raising the hands up to the shoulders during the third takbir after rising up from ruku, the evidence for this practice is found in a hadith collected by Bukhari which reports as follows: "**Abu Qilaba saw Malik ibn al-Huwayrith praying - he said the takbir and raised his hands. When he went to do ruku he raised his hands. When he raised his head from ruku (to stand upright), he raised his hands. He related that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had done the same as that.**"

After pronouncing the 3rd Takbir prior to entering the sujud (sajdah) position:

After completing the ruku portion of salatul-istikhara by standing fully erect, one should then pronounce the third takbir

and prostrate on the ground. This position is referred to as sujud or sajdah. Furthermore, when entering the sujud position, a Muslim performing salat has the option to either prostrate by placing either their knees or hands down first.

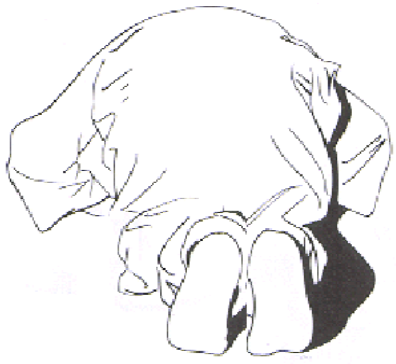


The evidence for entering sujud with the knees coming into contact with the ground before the hands is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Waa'il ibn Hajar narrated: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when he did sujud placing his knees down (on the ground) before his hands, and when he got up he raised his hands before his knees**." This is the position accepted by the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali Madhabs. However, the Maliki Madhab prefers prostrating with the hands touching the ground before the knees. The evidence supporting the Maliki Madhab's position is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said 'When one of you prostrates, he should not kneel as the animal kneels; instead, he should place his hands down before his knees**.'" In light of the above mentioned perspectives, it is worth mentioning that Shaykh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyah (RA), in Al-Fataawa (22/449) reportedly said: "Praying in both ways is permissible, according to the consensus of the scholars. If a person wants to go down knees first or hands first, his prayer is valid in either case, according to the consensus of the scholars, but they disputed as to which is preferable." Furthermore, Shaykh Bin Baz (RA) is also of the opinion that: "As for going down on knees before the hands when prostrating, it is the better practice based on the hadith of Wa'il Ibn Hujr in this regard as well as other hadith to the same effect. However, some scholars view that one should

go down on the hands before the knees is based on the hadith of Abu Hurayrah in this regard. Nevertheless, there is a good range of flexibility in this respect. Thus, the salah will be valid whether one goes down on the knees before the hands or the contrary. However, dispute is on which practice is better. The sound opinion is that it is better to go down on the knees before the hands due to the above mentioned evidence. Nevertheless, if someone goes down on the hands before the knees, it will be unobjectionable and their salah will be valid. Furthermore, regarding the hadith of Abu Hurayrah which prohibits one from offering salah by kneeling down like a camel does not contradict the hadith of Wa'il. Rather, they coincide with each other; because, a camel kneels down on its hands before its legs. As for the statement concluding the hadith of Abu Hurayrah : (He should place his hands (on the ground) before placing his knees,) it is more likely, according to many hadith scholars, to be mistakenly misreported by some narrators. However, the right order of words is: (He should place his knees (on the ground) before placing his hands.) Thus, the first part of the hadith would go in line with the concluding part and thus the two hadith of Wa'il and that of Abu Hurayrah can be reconciled and the dispute may be removed. May Allah grant us success."

It is also important to note that there is also a difference of opinion regarding the position of the feet during sujud; namely, should the feet be placed together while prostrating or spaced apart. The evidence presented by those who prefer keeping the feet together during sujud is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aishah (RA) reportedly said: "**I noticed that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was not there and he had been with me in my bed. I found him prostrating, with his heels together and his toes turned towards the qiblah, ...**"

FEET TOGETHER DURING SUJUD (PROSTRATION)



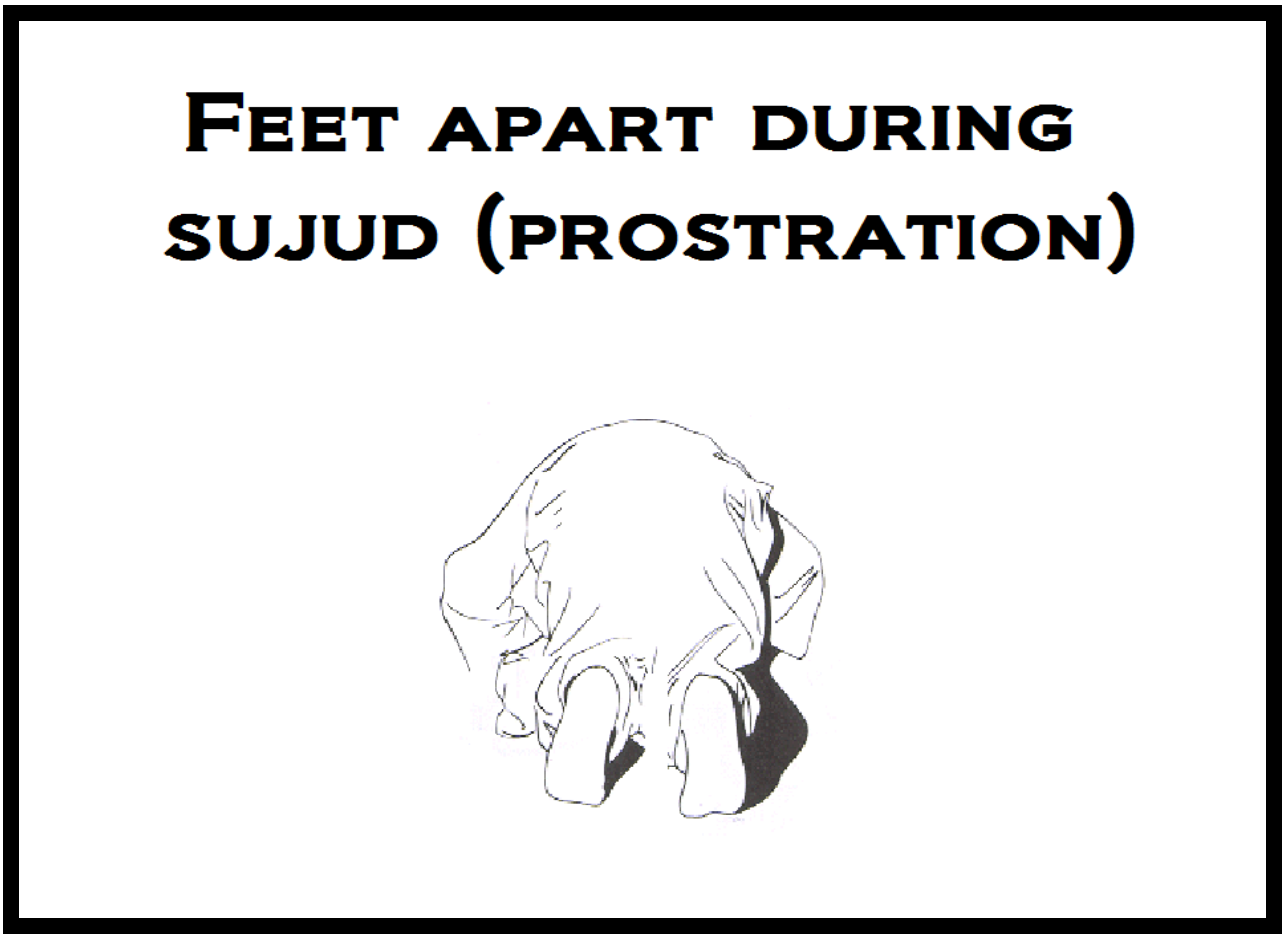
Based on the above mentioned hadith, keeping the feet together is a sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). As such, when

performing sajdah, one is permitted to prostrate with their feet together, while ensuring that the thighs and knees are separated. The evidence for keeping the knees and thighs separated during sujud is the hadith collected by Abu Dawud wherein Abu Humayd (RA) said, describing the prayer of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): **"When he prostrated, he kept his thighs apart."** The knees will automatically separated with the thighs.

Nevertheless, those who prefer to keep their feet separated along with the thighs and knees during sajdah, maintaining that it is from the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) sunnah, cite as evidence supporting their position the above mentioned hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Humayd (RA) said, with regard to describing the prayer of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): **"When He (P.B.U.H.) prostrated, He (P.B.U.H.) kept his thighs apart."** Their argument being, as declared by Al-Shawkaani (RA): "The words 'He (P.B.U.H.) kept his thighs apart' mean that He (P.B.U.H.)kept his thighs, knees and feet apart.'"

A final point on this matter is the statement of Al-Nawawi(RA) who reported: "Al-Shaafa'i and his companions said: 'It is mustahab (recommended) for the one who is prostrating to keep his knees and feet apart.'" Therefore, the scholars who hold this opinion maintain that since it is recommended to keep the knees and thighs apart when prostrating, quite naturally the

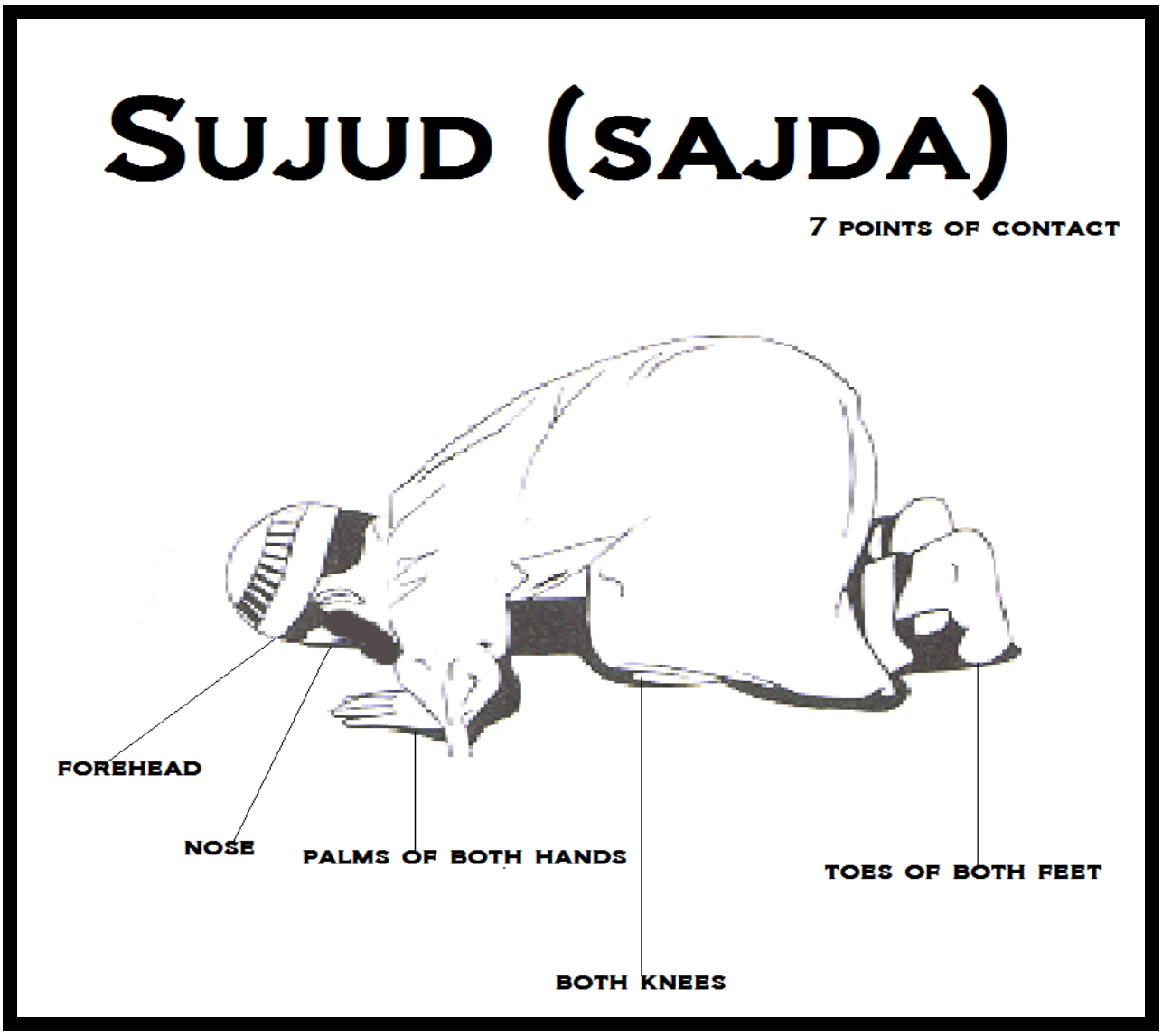
feet should also follow the knees and thighs; i.e., the feet should also be kept apart when prostrating.



Entering the sujud (sajdah) position After pronouncing the 3rd Takbir:

After completing the ruku portion of salatul-istikhara by standing fully erect, one should then pronounce the third takbir and proceed by prostrating in a manner which results in the forehead and nose, palms of both hands, both knees, and the toes

of both feet simultaneously being placed on the ground. This position is referred to as sujud or sajdah.



In fact, the Muslim performing salat will be deemed negligent if they fail to prostration without establishing seven points of contact with the ground; namely, the above mentioned forehead and nose, palms of both hands, both knees, and the toes of both feet. Furthermore, the forearms of the Muslim performing salat

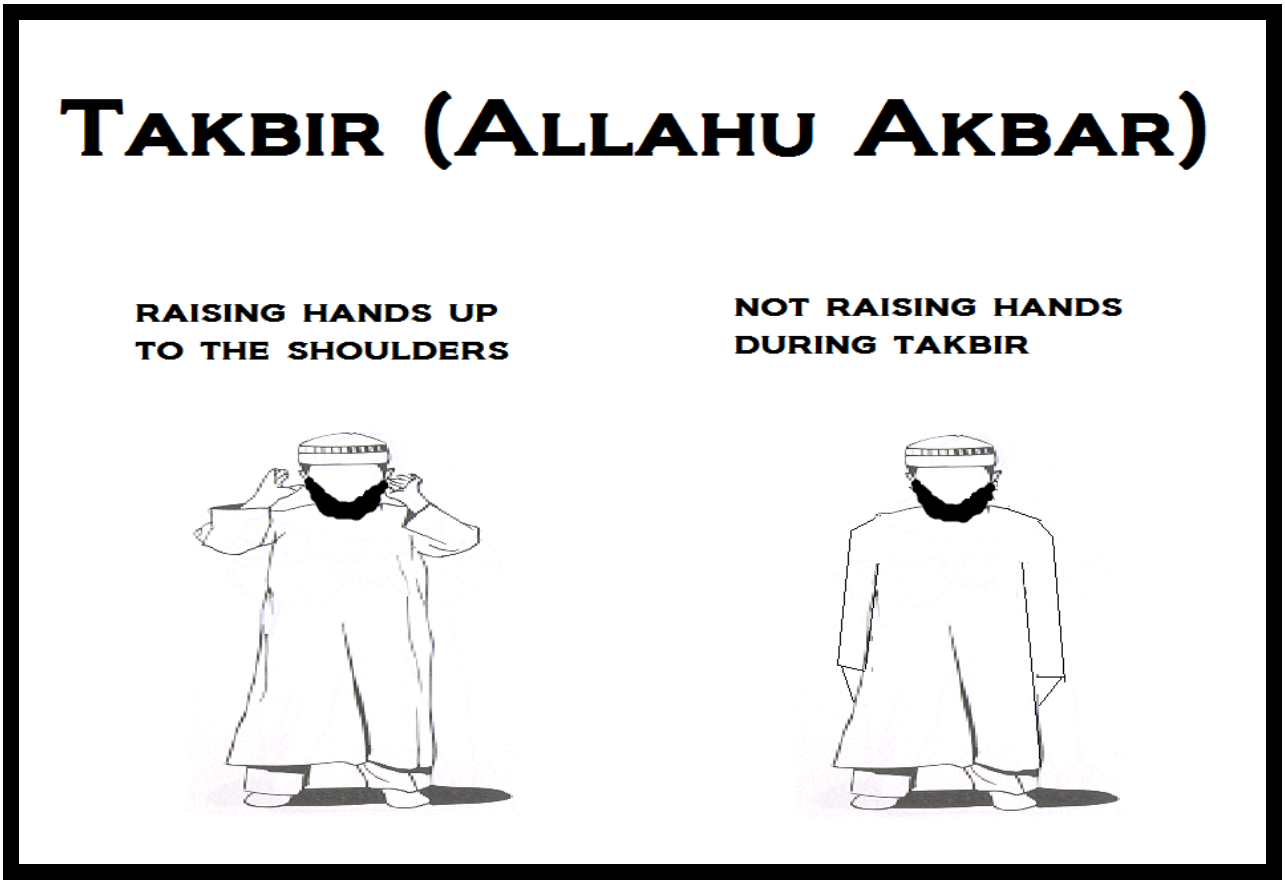
should also be positioned away from the ground and away from the body; as if they were positioned to do pushups. The toes should also be facing the Qibla and the fingers of the hands should not be spaced apart. The evidence for these rulings is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was ordered (by Allah) to prostrate on seven parts and not to tuck up the clothes or hair (while praying). Those parts are: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees, and the (toes of) both feet."** What is more, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Amr bin Ata reports: **"I was sitting with some of the companions of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and we were discussing about the way of praying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Abu Humaid As-Saidi said, 'I remember the prayer of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you.... In prostrations, he placed both his hands on the ground with the forearms away from the ground and away from his body, and his toes were facing the Qibla...'"** What is more, the ahadith of Abu Dawud and Ibn Khuzaimah reports: **"(In sujud), He (P.B.U.H.) would support himself on his palms [and spread them]',and 'put his fingers together.'"**

Lastly, according to the fatwa of Shaykh Bin Baz (RA) regarding the manner of the Prophet's salah, he reportedly said: "The fingers and toes should be directed towards the Qiblah; the

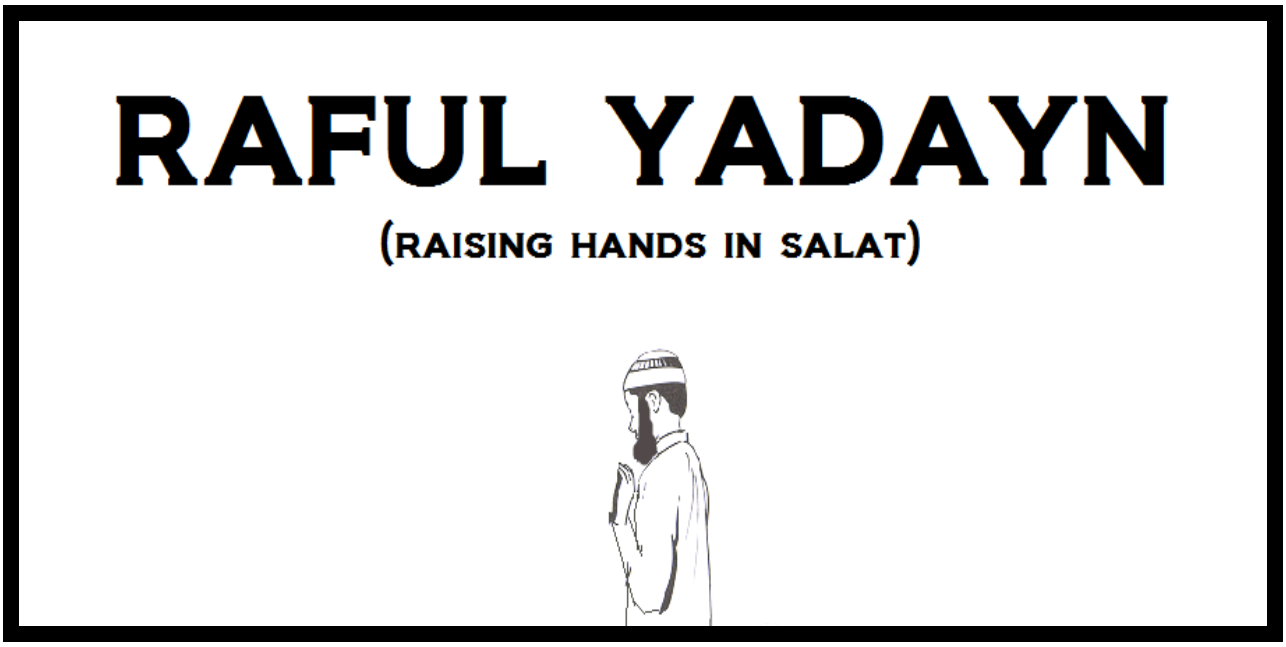
hands should be stretched, and the fingers should be close together; not separated. The Muslim should prostrate on seven parts of the body: the forehead, the nose, both hands, both knees, and the internal parts of the tips of the toes. (It is preferable that) one should say thrice or more (in odd numbers), "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the Supreme)."

The process of Sajdah described in full detail:

1) Pronounce the third takbir (Allahu Akbar) after standing fully erect from ruku. (One has the option to either raise the hands up to the shoulders or to not raise them at all.)



The evidence for the permissibility of raising the hands after standing erect from ruku and prior to prostrating in the sujud position is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Salim bin 'Abdullah reported: "**My father said, 'Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to raise both his hands up to the level of his shoulders when opening the prayer; and on saying the Takbir for bowing; and on raising his head from bowing he used to do the same, and then say "Sami a-l-lahu Liman hamida, Rabbana walaka-l-hamd...**"



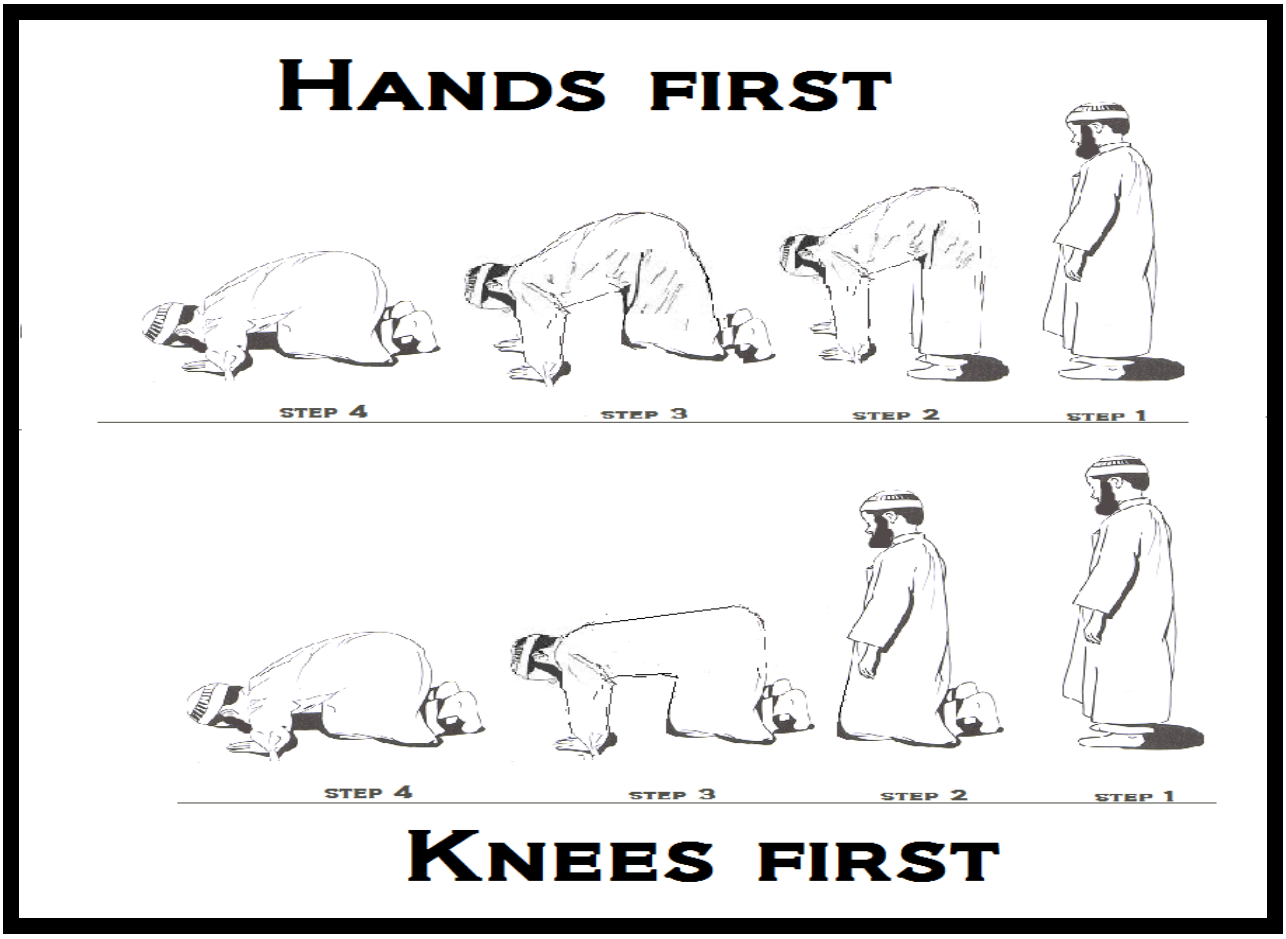
Likewise, the evidence for not raising the hands before entering sujud is found in a hadith from the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Alqama narrated that 'Abdullah ibn Masud (ra) reportedly said: "**Should I not demonstrate the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) for you? He (P.B.U.H.) performed the prayer, and did not raise his hands except at the initial takbir.**"

NOT RAISING HANDS BEFORE ENTERING SUJUD

In light of the above mentioned ahadith, it is important to note that the scholars have not reached a consensus as to which practice is ideal. Therefore, one has the option to perform either of these acts of worship. It is also worth mentioning that regarding the practice of raful yadayn (raising the hands in salat), the practice of the Shafii Madhab is to raise the hands in four instances; namely, with takbiratul ihram (starting the salat with the first saying of "Allahu Akbar"), before and after the ruku position, and after standing up for the third rakah of a four rakah prayer. The method employed by the Hanbali Madhab closely resembles the practice of the Shafii Madhab in that the Hanbalis prefer to raise their hands in three instances; namely, with takbiratul ihram, and before and after the ruku position. Whereas, the practice of the Hanafi Madhab is

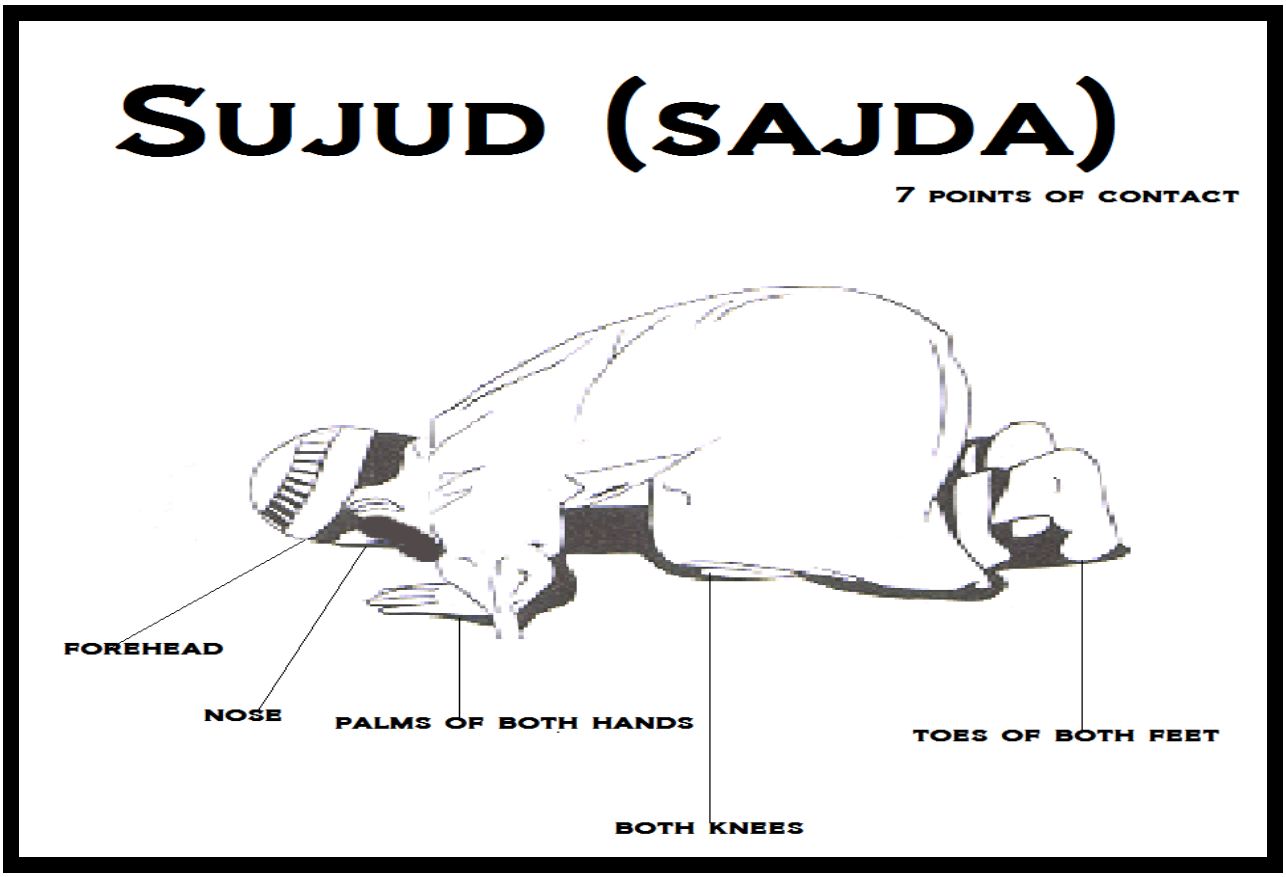
to only raise the hands in the beginning of the salat with the opening takbir (takbiratul ihram). Lastly, the method of the Maliki Madhab varies between the practice of raising only the hands at the beginning of the salat with the opening takbir to raising the hands in three instances; namely, with takbiratul ihram, and before and after the ruku position.

2) Enter the sujud/sajdah position (prostration) by placing the palms of the hands on the ground before the knees or prostrate by placing the knees on the ground before the hands.



The evidence for entering sujud with the knees coming into contact with the ground before the hands is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Waa'il ibn Hajar narrated: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when he did sujud placing his knees down (on the ground) before his hands, and when he got up he raised his hands before his knees**." This is the position accepted by the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali Madhabs. However, the Maliki Madhab prefers prostrating with the hands touching the ground before the knees. The evidence supporting the Maliki Madhab's position is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said 'When one of you prostrates, he should not kneel as the animal kneels; instead, he should place his hands down before his knees**.'"

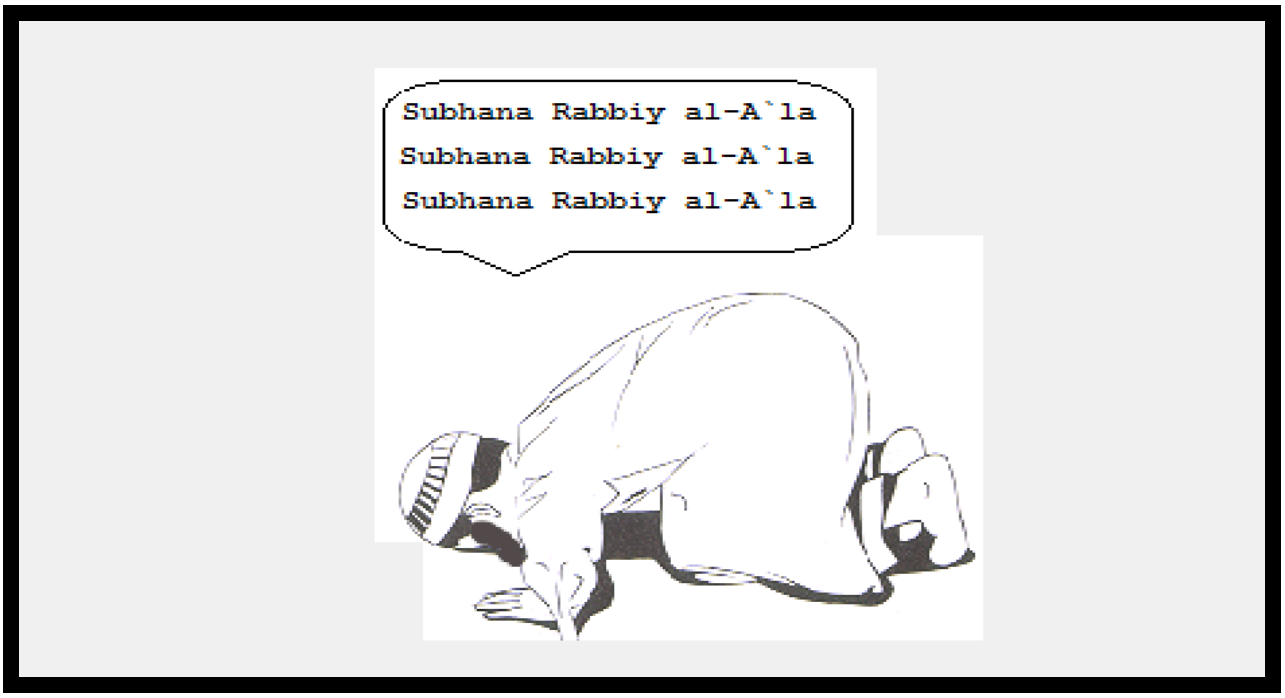
3) Once in the first sujud of the first rakah, align the fingers and toes towards the Qiblah, positioning the palms away from the head and body (level with the shoulders or level with the ears), as with the position for doing pushup. The fingers of the hands should also be close together and not separated. The nose and forehead should also be placed on the ground in order to establish seven points of the contact in sujud; i.e., the forehead and nose, both hands, both knees, and the tips of the toes of both feet should establish contact with the ground.



The evidence for these rulings is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was ordered (by Allah) to prostrate on seven parts .... Those parts are: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees, and the (toes of) both feet."** Moreover, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Amr bin Ata reports: **"I was sitting with some of the companions of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and we were discussing about the way of praying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Abu Humaid As-Saidi said, 'I remember the prayer of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you.... In prostrations, he placed both his hands on**

the ground with the forearms away from the ground and away from his body, and his toes were facing the Qibla...'" What is more, the ahadith of Abu Dawud and Ibn Khuzaimah reports: "**(In sujud), He (P.B.U.H.) would support himself on his palms [and spread them]',and 'put his fingers together**.'"

4) After establishing seven points of contact with the ground, become completely at ease/relaxed while in sujud (keep eyes open) and say, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la" (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three times. (Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la can be repeated more than three times, so long as it is done in odd number units such as 3, 5, 7, etc.)



The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)**

said: 'The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state).'" Furthermore, a hadith collected by Abu Dawud reports, supplicate in sujud by saying: "Glory is to my Lord, the Most High."

5) Raise up from prostrating (sajdah) saying "Allahu Akbar" into a fully relaxed sitting position (jalsah).

JALSAH POSITION

RAISE UP FROM PROSTRATING (SAJDAH) SAYING "ALLAHU AKBAR" INTO A FULLY RELAXED SITTING POSITION (JALSAH) WITH THE PALMS OF THE HANDS RESTING ON THE THIGHS AND KNEES

THE BACK SHOULD ALSO BE MADE STRAIGHT (FULLY ERECT)

BEND THE LEFT FOOT AND SITTING ON IT (INSIDE ANKLE), WHILE KEEPING THE RIGHT FOOT PROPPED UP (HEEL IN THE AIR AND THE TOES ON THE GROUND POINTING FORWARD TOWARDS THE QIBLAH).

While in jalsah, the palms of the hands should be positioned on the thighs and knees (the right palm on the right thigh and knee and the left palm on the left thigh and knee), while simultaneously bending the left foot and

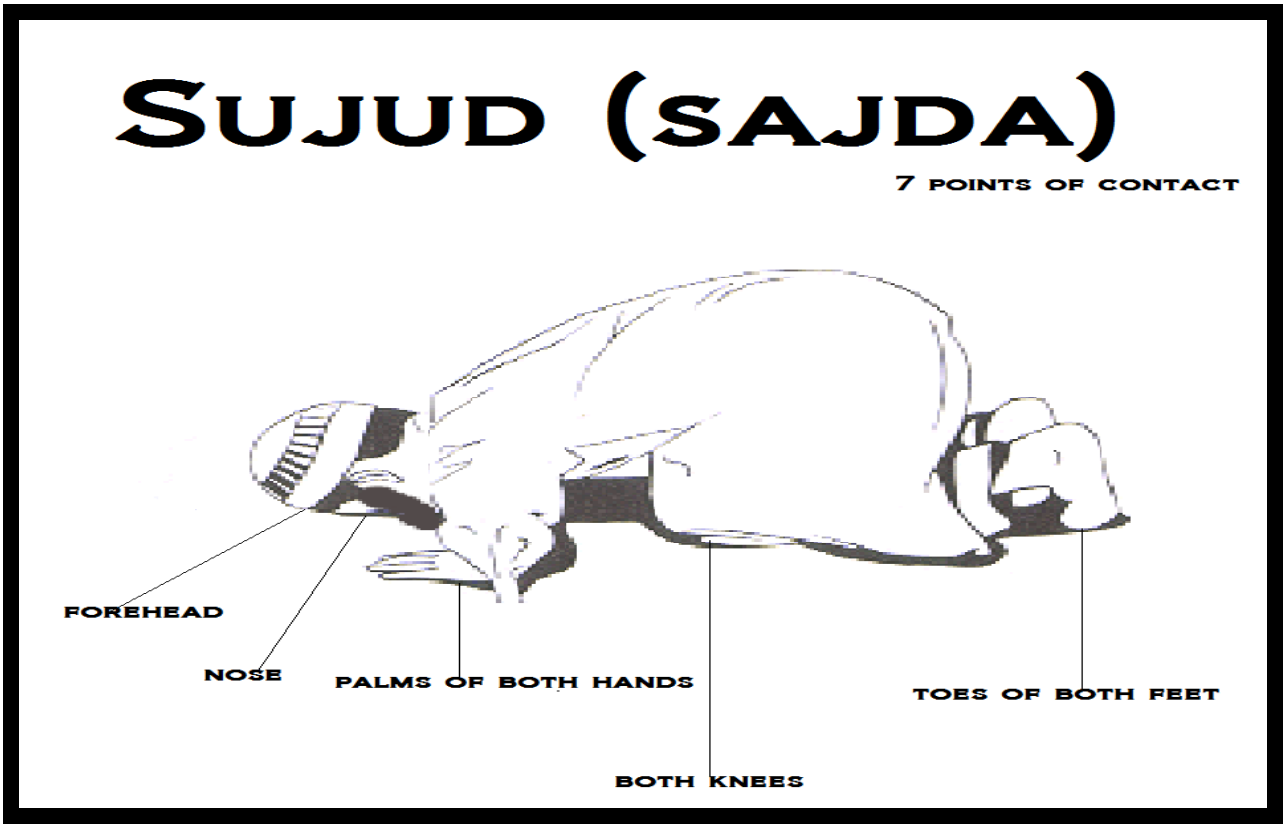
sitting on it (inside ankle), while keeping the right foot propped up (heel in the air and the toes on the ground pointing forward towards the Qiblah). The back and head should also be made straight (eyes positioned on the place of prostration).

The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ikrima reported: "..... **He (P.B.U.H.) used to say Takbir on prostrating and on raising his head from prostration**....." What is more, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "..... **prostrate calmly till you feel at ease and then raise (your head) and sit with Calmness till you feel at ease and then prostrate with calmness till you feel at ease in prostration and do the same in the whole of your prayer**." Furthermore, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abdullah bin Zubayr reports: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) sat in prayer, he placed the left foot between his thigh and calf and stretched the right foot and placed his left hand on his left thigh and his right hand on his right thigh**." Lastly, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated from Muhammad ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Ata’ reports that Abu Humayd al-Saa’idi said: "..... **Then he (P.B.U.H.) went down in prostration, then he (P.B.U.H.) said 'Allaahu akbar' and held his upper arms away from his body and**

spread out his toes. Then he (P.B.U.H.) would tuck his foot under his body and sit on it. Then he (P.B.U.H.) sat upright (in jalsah) until every bone returned to its place.'"

Special note: In this position one can make duah to Allah. The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abdullah ibn Abbas reportedly said: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to say between the two prostrations: 'Allaahumma ighfir li warhamni wajburni wahdini warzuqni (O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, guide me, heal me, and provide for me)**.'"

6) Pronounce the fourth takbir (Allahu Akbar) while in jalsah to initiate the second sajdah of the first rakah.



Once seven points of contact are established with the ground during the second sajdah of the first rakah, calmly say, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three or more times in odd number units.

The evidence for this practice is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein A'isha reportedly said, "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to often say in his ruku and sajda, 'Glory be to You, O Allah, our Lord, and by Your praise. O Allah, forgive me!' ....**'"

7) After calmly saying, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three times, once again, raise up from prostrating in sujud into a fully relaxed sitting (jalsah) position.

JALSAH POSITION

RAISE UP FROM PROSTRATING (SAJDAH) SAYING "ALLAHU AKBAR" INTO A FULLY RELAXED SITTING POSITION (JALSAH) WITH THE PALMS OF THE HANDS RESTING ON THE THIGHS AND KNEES

THE BACK SHOULD ALSO BE MADE STRAIGHT (FULLY ERECT)

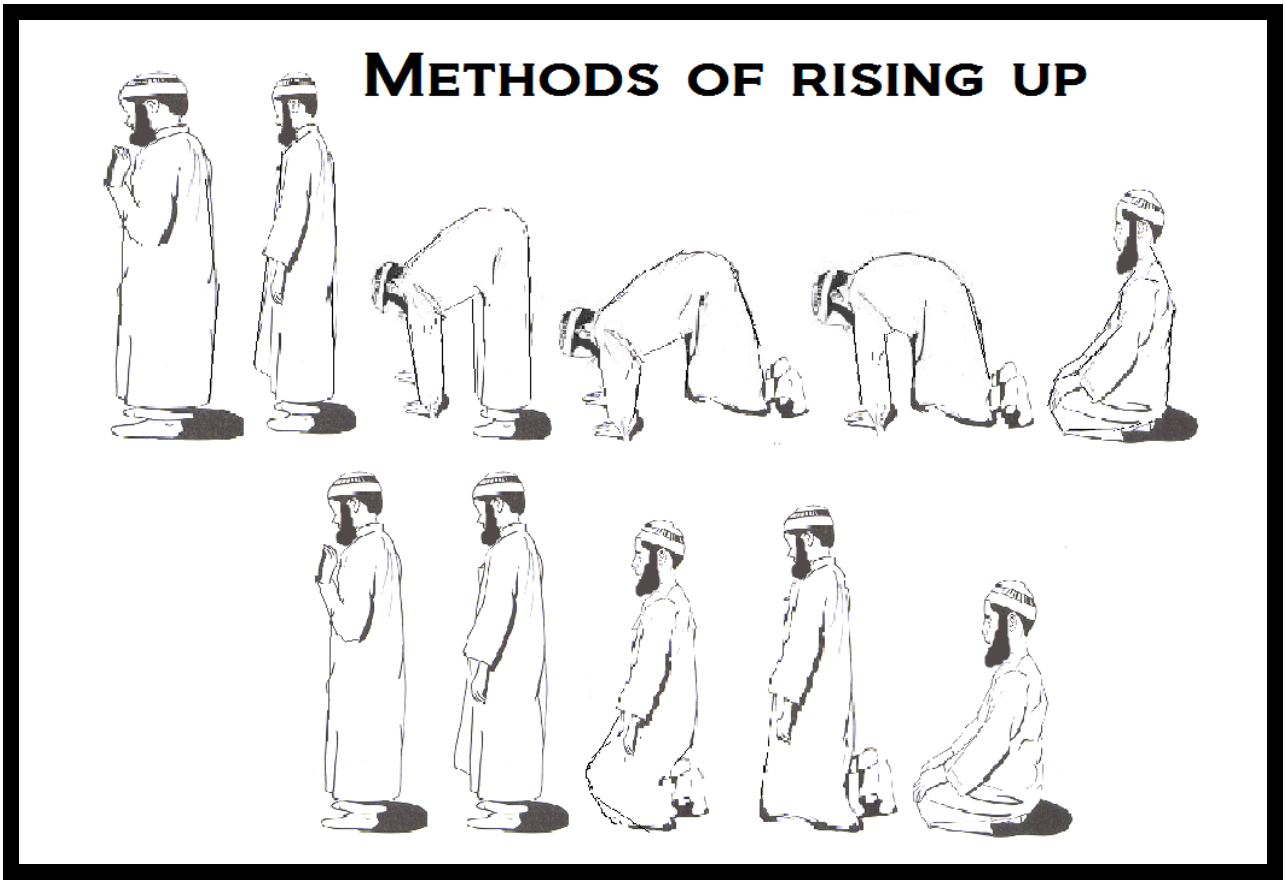
BEND THE LEFT FOOT AND SITTING ON IT (INSIDE ANKLE), WHILE KEEPING THE RIGHT FOOT PROPPED UP (HEEL IN THE AIR AND THE TOES ON THE GROUND POINTING FORWARD TOWARDS THE QIBLAH).

While in the second jalsah of the first rakah, again place the palms of the hands on top of the thighs and knees, while simultaneously bending the left foot and sitting on it (inside ankle), while keeping the right foot propped up (heel in the air and the toes on the ground pointing forward towards the Qiblah). Then pronounce the fifth takbir (Allahu Akbar), with the back and head being made straight, while the eyes remain fixed on the place of prostration. Once the back is fully straight (this sitting for rest a longer while before standing is termed "Jalsah al-Istiraha"),

The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ikrima reported: "**..... He (P.B.U.H.) used to say Takbir on prostrating and on raising his head from prostration**....." What is more, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "**..... prostrate calmly till you feel at ease and then raise (your head) and sit with Calmness till you feel at ease and then prostrate with calmness till you feel at ease in prostration and do the same (raise the head) in the whole of your prayer**." Furthermore, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abdullah bin Zubayr reports: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) sat in prayer, he placed the left foot between his thigh and calf and**

stretched the right foot and placed his left hand on his left thigh and his right hand on his right thigh." Lastly, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn 'Ata' reports that Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi said: "..... **Then he (P.B.U.H.) would tuck his foot under his body and sit on it. Then he (P.B.U.H.) sat upright (in jalsah) until every bone returned to its place**.'"

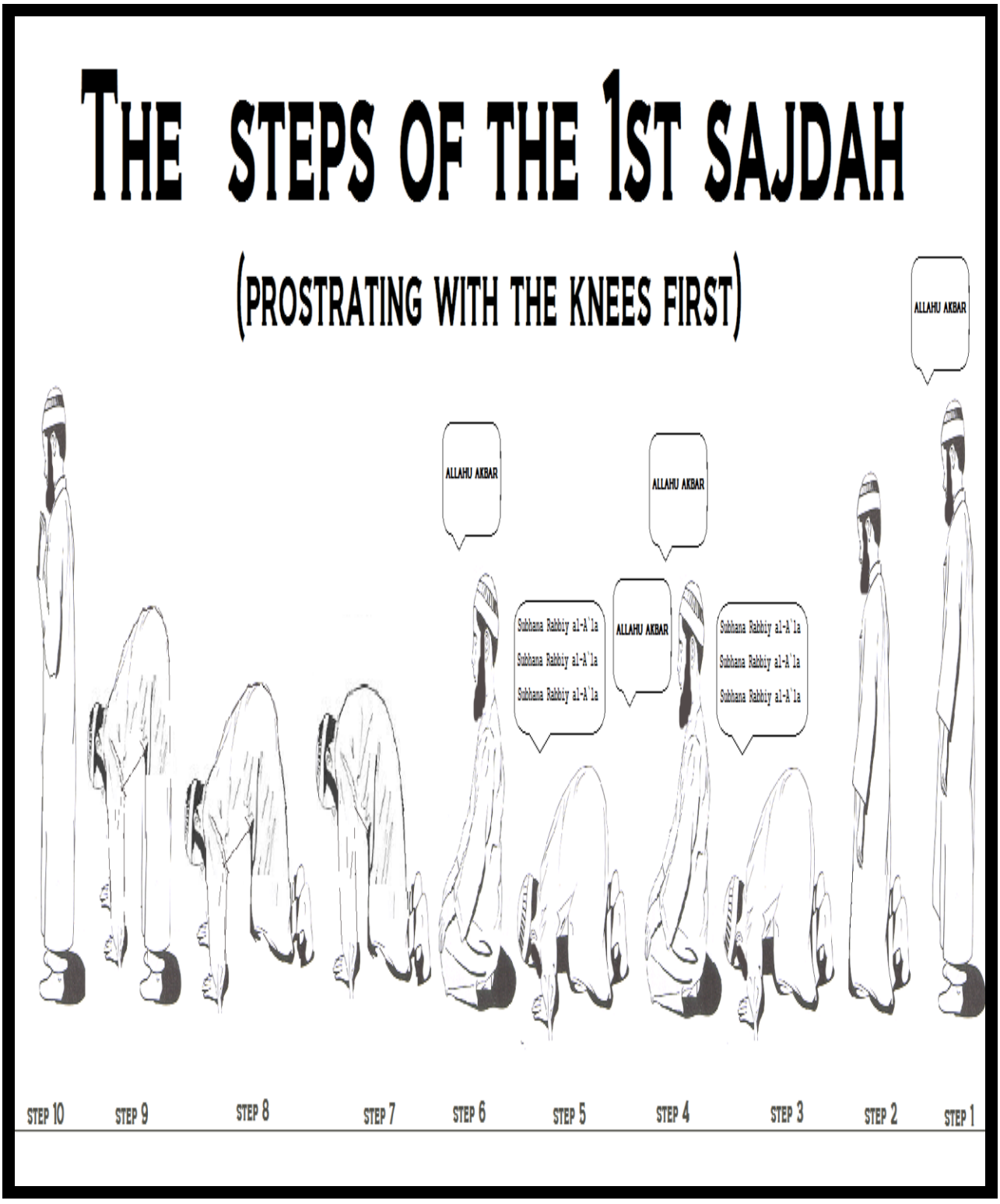
8) After pronouncing the fifth takbir (Allahu Akbar), while sitting in the jalsah position, calmly stand up and raise the hands up to the shoulders in order to enter the second qiyam position of salatul istikhara.

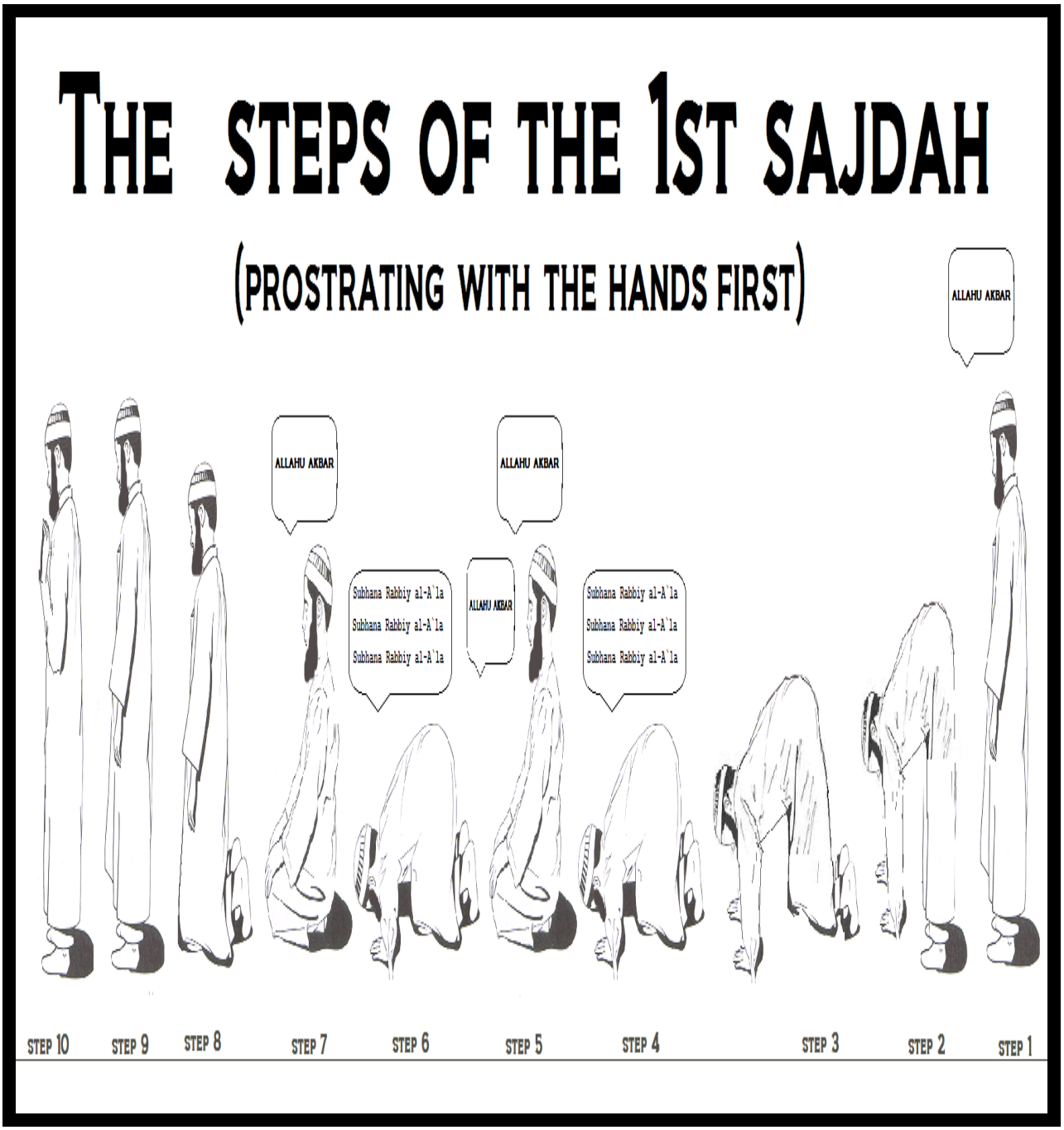


During the process of standing up from sujud after pronouncing the fifth takbir (Allahu Akbar), one should do so by either raising the hands before the knees or by placing the hands down on the ground to assist with raising the knees and body to a standing (qiyam) position. The evidence for these rulings is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Waa'il ibn Hajar narrated: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when he did sujud placing his knees down (on the ground) before his hands, and when he got up (from sujud) he raised his hands before his knees**." Also, the hadith collected by Bukhari reports: "**He (P.B.U.H.) would get up for the second rak'ah, supporting himself on the ground (with the hands)**." Furthermore, a narration of Baihaqi (RA) reports: "The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) would clench his fists during salat, supporting himself with his hands when getting up." It is also worth mentioning that this is the opinion of Shaykh Albani (RA) who reported: "He (P.B.U.H.) would sit up straight on his left foot, at ease, until every bone returned to its proper place, then stand up, supporting himself on the ground; and he would clench his fists (literally, as one kneading dough), supporting himself with his hands when standing up."

It is also important to note that the scholars have not reached a consensus regarding the ideal method of rising up to qiyam from sujud. The opinion of some is that getting up by the

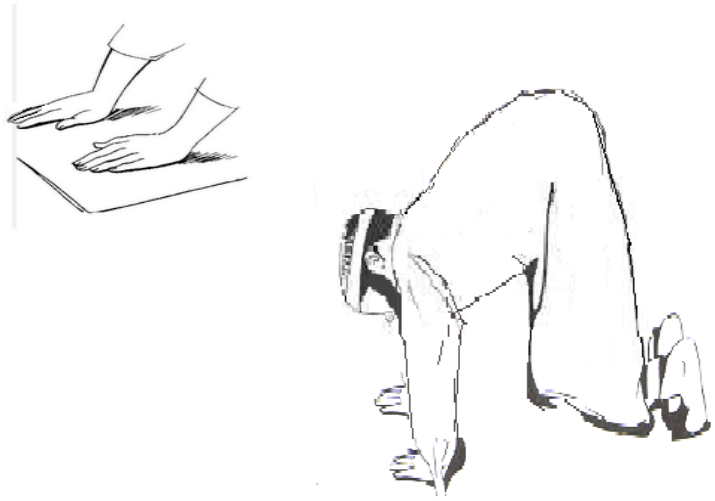
support of fists is effective only at the time of necessity, such as due to old age, illness, obesity, etc.





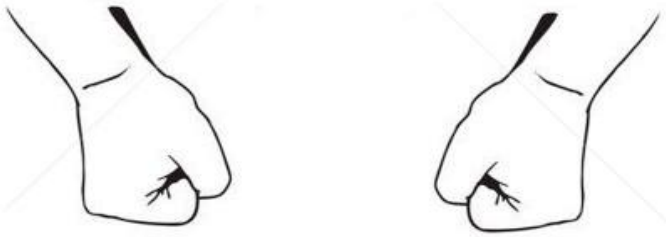
It is worth mentioning that when returning to the qiyam (standing) position from sujud, Muslims generally engage in the practice of doing so by either placing the palms flat on the ground, as with performing sujud or by placing the knuckles down on the ground; similar to the method one uses to knead dough.

PALMS DOWN



CLENCHED FISTS

AAJIN (AS WITH KNEADING DOUGH)



Both methods are supported in ahadith. However, the scholars have not reached a consensus regarding which method is ideal. Thus, making either method acceptable.

The hadith used as evidence to prove that when a Muslim stands from sujud, in order to enter the qiyam position of the next rakah, he should do so by supporting himself on clenched fists like a person kneading dough, reads as follows: "**When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would stand up in salah he would place his hands upon the ground just as an aajin does**." Shaykh Albani (RA) classified this hadith as being sound. However, Hafidh Ibn Hajar (RA) has a difference of opinion, and says in al-Talkhees al-Habeer: "Ibn al-Salah (RA) has said in his notes on al-Waseet that this hadith is not authentic and is unknown; and further states that the word aajin pertains to an old man rather than kneading dough. With this being said, Ibn al-Salah (RA) also maintains that "ajn" (the root from which the word "aajin" is derived) pertains to the heavy leaning on the hands (palms) for support, and not the clenching of the fists. Imam Nawawi (RA) also shares the opinion of Hafidh Ibn Hajar (RA) and is reported to have said in Sharh al-Muhaddhab that the hadith in question is weak or false, and it has no basis."

Nevertheless, the renowned hadith scholar, Bukhari reported in his book under the section titled, "Supporting oneself while getting up from prostration," that Malik bin Harith was asked about the prayer of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). He said, "**It was like the prayer of our Sheikh Amr Ibn Salama.' Ayyoob said, The**

latter used to pronounce the Takbeer perfectly when he raised up from the second prostration (of a rakah in jalsah) and would sit for a while, and then supported himself on the ground before standing up." Additionally, in Al-Fath, Al Hafiz Ibn Hajar (RA) reportedly said that the purpose of Bukhari's title, "Supporting oneself while getting up from prostration" is to highlight the action of clenching one's fists on the earth at the time of getting up from the prostration or at the time of sitting.

Lastly, Ibn Qudamah relates from Ali the hadith of Bukhari which reads: "**It is Sunnah in prayer that when one stands up during the first two rakah, that they should not clench their fists on the earth except if they are aged and cannot stand without support.**" Sheikh Albani classified this hadith as being "weak in the context for which it is being used;" because, it is contrary to the sound hadith of Al Baihaqi wherein Al-Azraq bin Qais reportedly said, "**I saw Ibn Umar performing prayer, when he got up from the second rakah he put his hand on the earth and leaned on them to get up. I said to his sons and his companions, perhaps he is doing so due to his old age. They said, 'No, this is the usual way of performing prayer.**" Allah knows best!

9) After reciting takbir and calmly standing up from jalsah, one should either raise the hands up to the shoulders or not perform raful yadayn (raising the hands) in order to

enter the second qiyam position of the salat. Then again fold the arms across the body and silently recite Surah Al-Fatihah; this time beginning with "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim." (It is not necessary to repeat the duahs recited before saying the words "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim" of Surah Al-Fatihah as performed in the first rakah)

ONE HAS THE OPTION OF EITHER PERFORMING RAFUL YADAYN OR NOT AFTER STANDING UP FROM SUJUD

PLACE FEET SHOULDER WIDTH APART

The evidence for the practice of raising one's hands to the shoulders while saying the second takbir is the hadith collected

by Ahmad wherein Malik bin al Huwayrith (ra) reported: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) raised his hands in his salah until he brought them in line with the top of his ears, when he bowed into ruku, when he raised his head from ruku, when he fell down into sujud, and when he raised his head from sujud**." Likewise, the evidence for not performing raful yadayn (raising the hands in salat) is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Salim bin 'Abdullah narrated: "**My father said, 'Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to raise both his hands up to the level of his shoulders when opening the prayer; and on saying the Takbir for bowing. And on raising his head from bowing he used to do the same and then say 'Sami a-l-lahu Liman hamida, Rabbana walaka-l-hamd;' he did not do that (i.e. raising his hands) in prostrations**.'" Furthermore, the evidence for folding the arms in salat is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Sahl bin Sa'd reported: "**The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in the prayer**...'" Also, the proof for beginning the recitation with bismillah is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) commenced his salah with 'Bismillah al Rahman al Rahim' (In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful)**." Lastly, the evidence for reciting Surah Al-Fathia in the second rakah of salat is the hadith collected by Imam Muslim wherein Ata narrated on the authority

of Abu Huraira who reportedly said: "**One should recite (al-Fatiha) in every (rak'ah of) prayer**...'"

10) Silently recite Surah Al-Fathia in the second rakah of the salat by starting with bismillah, and not reciting any duah such as thana (sana) or Ta`awwudh (Seeking refuge from Shaytan). Then complete the recitation by saying "ameen."

The evidence for the practice of beginning the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah by saying the Arabic words "Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim," which translates into the English language as "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful;" either audibly or silently, is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Anas is reported to have said: "**I observed prayer along with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and with Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, but I never heard any one of them reciting Bismillah al Rahman al Rahim loudly**." Likewise, the permissibility for reciting Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim audibly before commencing with the recitation of Surah Al-Fatihah is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Ibn Abbas is reported to have said: "**Allah's Messenger (P.B.U.H.) commenced his salah with 'Bismillah al Rahman al Rahim' (In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful)**." The evidence for reciting Surah Al-Fatihah in salat is the hadith Qudsi of Bukhari wherein Ubada bin As Samit narrated: Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) said, "**Whoever does**

not recite Al-Fatihah in his prayer, his prayer is invalid."

Further evidence is also found in the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: **"A prayer performed by someone who has not recited the Essence of the Quran (1) during it is deficient (and he repeated the word three times), incomplete. Someone said to Abu Hurayrah: [Even though] we are behind the imam? (2) He said: Recite it to yourself, for I have heard the Prophet (may the blessings and peace of Allah be up on him) say: Allah (mighty and sublime be He), had said: I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. When the servant says: Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi l-alamin (3), Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has praised Me. And when he says: Ar-rahmani r-rahim (4), Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says: My servant has extolled Me, and when he says: Maliki yawmi d-din (5), Allah says: My servant has glorified Me - and on one occasion He said: My servant has submitted to My power. And when he says: Iyyaka na budu wa iyyaka nasta in (6), He says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. And when he says: Ihdina s-sirata l- mustaqim, siratal ladhina an amta alayhim ghayril-maghdubi alayhim wa la d-dallin (7), He says: This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for.'"**

The Arabic text reads: "**Bis-mil laa-hir rah-maa-nir ra-heem. Al-ham-du lil-laa-hi rab-bil `aa-la-meen. Ar-rah-maa nir-ra-heem. Maa-li-ki yaw-mid-deen. ee yaa-ka na `-bu-du wa ee yaa-ka nas-ta-`een. Ih di-nas si-raa-tal mus-ta-qeem Si-raa-tal la-**

zee-na an-`am-ta `a-lay-him, ghay-ril magh-doo-bi `a-lai-him wa-lad-daal-leen." This translates into English as: "In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the most merciful. All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; the beneficent, the most merciful; master of the Day of Judgment; thee alone do we worship and thee alone do we beseech for help; guide us to the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors, not of those whom have earned your anger, nor of those who went astray)."

Lastly, after reciting surah Al-Fatihah, one should then say "ameen." (silently in a silent prayer and audibly in an audible prayer) The evidence for these ruling is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Alqama ibn Waeel narrated from his father: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) after reciting the words GHAIRIL MAGDUBI ALAIHIM WA LAD DALLIN, read AMEEN with a silent voice**." Also, in a hadith collected by Bukhari, Abu Huraira narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, 'When the Imam says: 'Ghair-il-Maghdubi 'Alaihim Walad-Dallin (i.e. not the path of those who earn Your Anger, nor the path of those who went astray, then you must say, 'ameen', for if one's utterance of 'ameen' coincides with that of the angels, then his past sins will be forgiven**.'" However, it is important to note that the reciting of "ameen" should be elongated. The proof for this

ruling is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Wail ibn Hujr narrated: "**Having heard the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) recite (in the salah the last verse of al-Fatihah) and say (Ameen), he prolonged his voice**."

11) At the completion of reciting Surah Al-Fatihah, pronounce the sixth takbir, raising both hands up to the shoulders and proceed to the ruku phase of the second rakah.

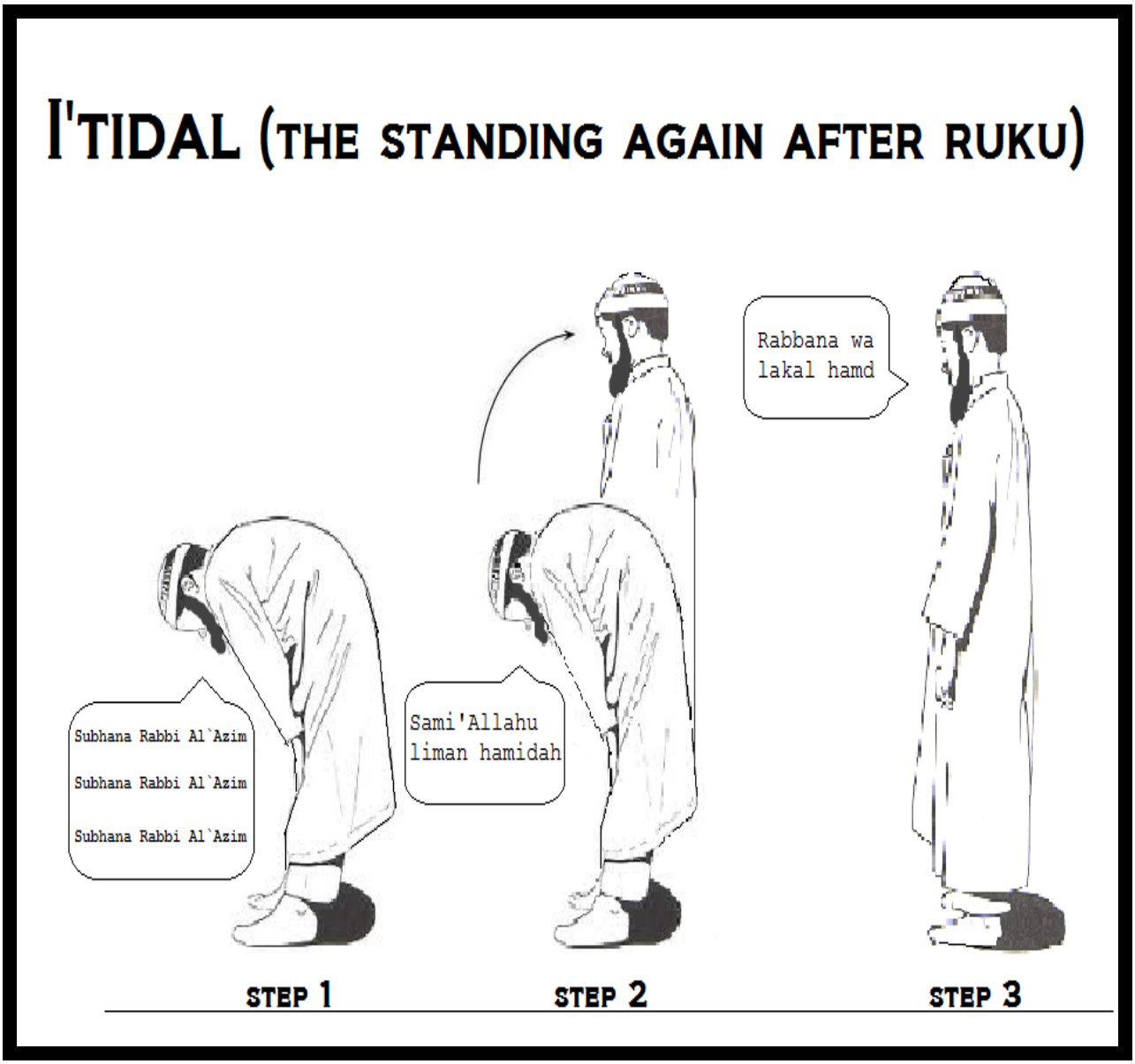
RUKU (BOWING)

AFTER SAYING THE TAKBIR AT THE END OF THE QIYAM POSITION, PROCEED TO THE RUKU POSITION BY BENDING OVER IN A 90 DEGREE ANGLE AND PLACE THE PALM OF THE RIGHT HAND OVER THE RIGHT KNEE AND THE PALM OF THE LEFT HAND OVER THE LEFT KNEE

While in ruku with the palms of both hands resting on top of the knees say, سبحان ربي العظيم - Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the great) three times.

The evidence for the specific details of the ruku position of salat is found in the hadith of Ahmad wherein Malik bin al Huwayrith is reported to have said: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) raised his hands in salah until he brought them in line with the top of his ears when he bowed into ruku...."** In addition, the hadith of Bukhari narrated by Abu Humayd As-Saa'idi reports: **"When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made Ruku', he would firmly put his hands on his knees while making his back straight (with respect to his hips)."** Lastlt, a hadith collected by Ibn Majah that was narrated by Ibn Masud reports: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'When anyone of you bows (ruku), let him say in his bowing: 'Subhana Rabbiyal-Azim (Glory is to my Lord, the Most Great)' three times; if he does that his bowing will be complete..."**

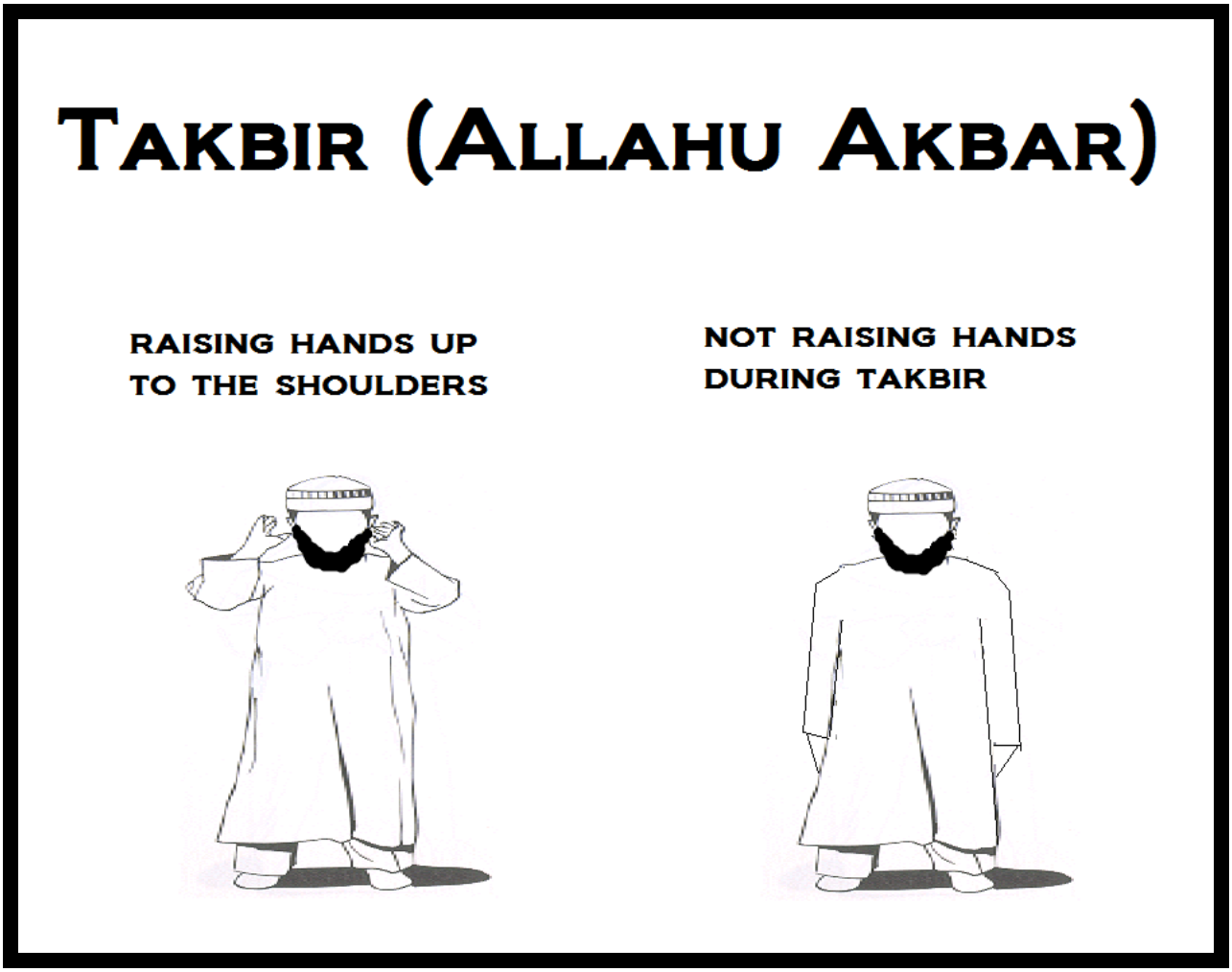
12) After reciting Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the great) three times, rise up from ruku saying sami Allahu liman hamidah (Allah hears those who praise him); then once standing fully erect in qawma say, Rabbana wa lakal hamd (Our Lord, all praise is for you), and establish i'tidal.



The evidence for reciting Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the great) three times while in the ruku position of the salat is a hadith in the collection of Imam Muslim wherein Hudhayfah narrated: "**I prayed with the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.).....; He (P.B.U.H.) would bow (in ruku) and say:** سبحان ربي العظيم **'Glory be to my Mighty Lord' (Subhanah Rabbi-al-Azim)...**"

Furthermore, the evidence for what should be recited after saying Subhana Rabbi Al`Azim (glory to my lord the great) three times is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira who was reported to have said: "**When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, سمع الله لمن حمده 'Sami' a-l-lahu Liman hamida,'(Allah heard those who praises Him), he would say, ربنا ولك الحمد 'rabbana wa-laka-l-hamd.'(upon rising up to a standing position in ruku) ...**" Lastly, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari serves as evidence for the manner of performing the ruku portion of the salat. The hadith in question that was narrated by Abu Hurayra reports as follows: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) entered the mosque and a man entered and prayed. He came and greeted the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who returned the greeting and said, 'Go back and pray. You have not prayed.' He (the man) prayed and came and greeted the Prophet P.B.U.H.) a second time, who again said three times, 'Go back and pray for you have not prayed.' He (the man) said, 'By the One who sent you with the truth, I cannot do any better than that, so teach me.' He (P.B.U.H.)said, 'When you stand for the prayer, say the takbir and then recite something you know well from the Qur'an and then do ruku' until you are at rest in your ruku. Then stand back up until you are completely upright..... Do that throughout all of your prayer.'"**

13) Pronounce the seventh takbir (Allahu Akbar) after standing fully erect from ruku, (either raising the hands to the shoulders or not).



The evidence for this practice is found in a hadith collected by Bukhari which reports as follows: **"Abu Qilaba saw Malik ibn al-Huwayrith praying - he said the takbir and raised his hands. When he went to do ruku he raised his hands. When he raised his head from ruku (to stand upright), he raised his hands. He related that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had done the same as that."**

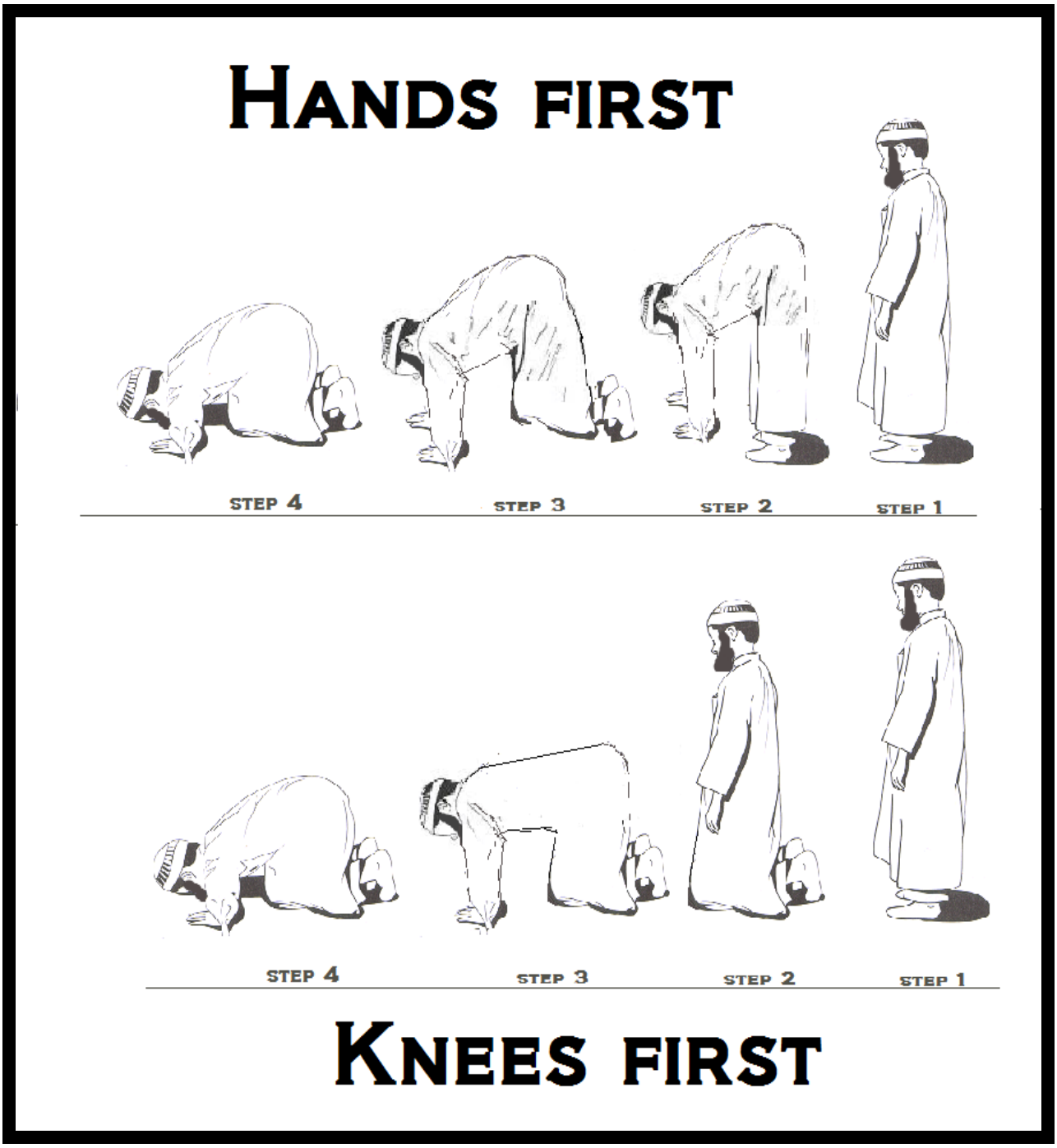
RAFUL YADAYN

(RAISING HANDS IN SALAT)

Likewise, the evidence for not raising the hands is another hadith of Bukhari wherein Abu Humaid narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) came up (from ruku) and stood straight until every vertebra (of his Spinal Column) came back to its (natural) place**." Thus, implying that in order to fully straighten the spine upon rising from ruku, the entire body should be returned to its natural standing position; which involves the arms hanging down versus being folded; i.e., justifying why the arms and hands are hanging down in the first place.

NOT RAISING THE HANDS AFTER STANDING STRAIGHT FROM RUKU

14) Then proceed to the sujud position a third time by either placing the palms of the hands on the ground before the knees or simply place the knees on the ground before touching with the hands.

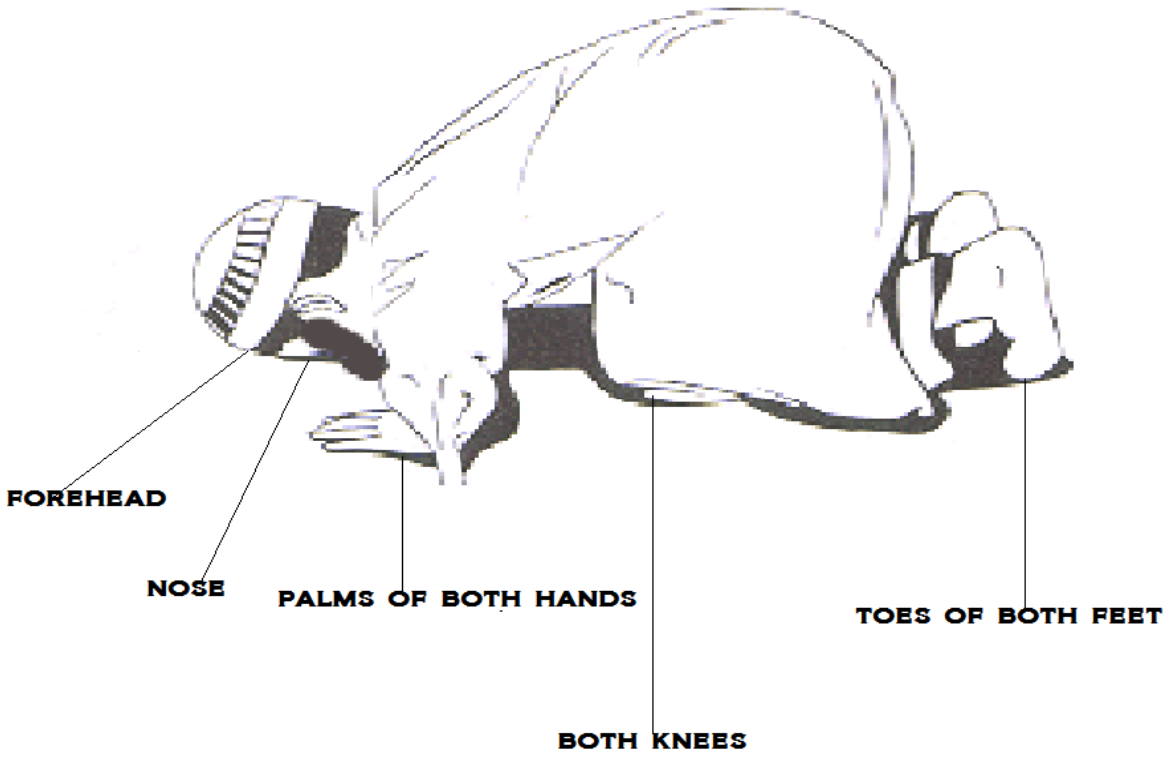


The evidence for entering sujud with the knees coming into contact with the ground before the hands is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Waa'il ibn Hajar is reported to have said: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), when he did sujud placing his knees down (on the ground) before his hands, and when he got up he raised his hands before his knees**." This is the position accepted by the Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali Madhabs. However, the Maliki Madhab prefers prostrating with the hands touching the ground before the knees. The evidence supporting the Maliki Madhab's position is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abu Huraira is reported to have said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: 'When one of you prostrates, he should not kneel as the animal kneels; instead, he should place his hands down before his knees**.'"

15) Once in the first sujud of the second rakah, align the fingers and toes towards the Qiblah, positioning the palms away from the head and body (level with the shoulders or level with the ears), as with the position for doing pushup. The fingers of the hands should also be close together and not separated. The nose and forehead should also be placed on the ground in order to establish seven points of the contact in sujud; i.e., the forehead and nose, both hands, both knees, and the tips of the toes of both feet should establish contact with the ground.

SUJUD (SAJDA)

7 POINTS OF CONTACT



After establishing seven points of contact with the ground, become completely at ease/relaxed while in sujud (keeping the eyes open) and say, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la" (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three times. (Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la can be repeated more than three times, so long as it is done in odd number units such as 3, 5, 7, etc.)

The evidence for the ruling of prostrating on seven bones or points of contact is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was ordered (by Allah) to prostrate on seven parts .... Those parts are: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees, and the (toes of) both feet**." Moreover, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Amr bin Ata reports: "**I was sitting with some of the companions of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and we were discussing about the way of praying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Abu Humaid As-Saidi said, 'I remember the prayer of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you.... In prostrations, he placed both his hands on the ground with the forearms away from the ground and away from his body, and his toes were facing the Qibla...**'" Regarding the manner of prostrating is the ahadith of Abu Dawud and Ibn Khuzaimah wherein it is reported: "**(In sujud), He (P.B.U.H.) would support himself on his palms [and spread them]',and 'put his fingers together**.'" Furthermore, the evidence for suplicating while in sujud is a hadith collected by Imam Muslim narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state).**'" Lastly, a hadith collected by Abu Dawud reports, supplicate in sujud by saying: "**Glory is to my Lord, the Most High**."

16) Raise up from prostrating (sajdah) saying "Allahu Akbar" an eighth time, into a fully relaxed sitting position (jalsah).

JALSAH POSITION

RAISE UP FROM PROSTRATING (SAJDAH) SAYING "ALLAHU AKBAR" INTO A FULLY RELAXED SITTING POSITION (JALSAH) WITH THE PALMS OF THE HANDS RESTING ON THE THIGHS AND KNEES

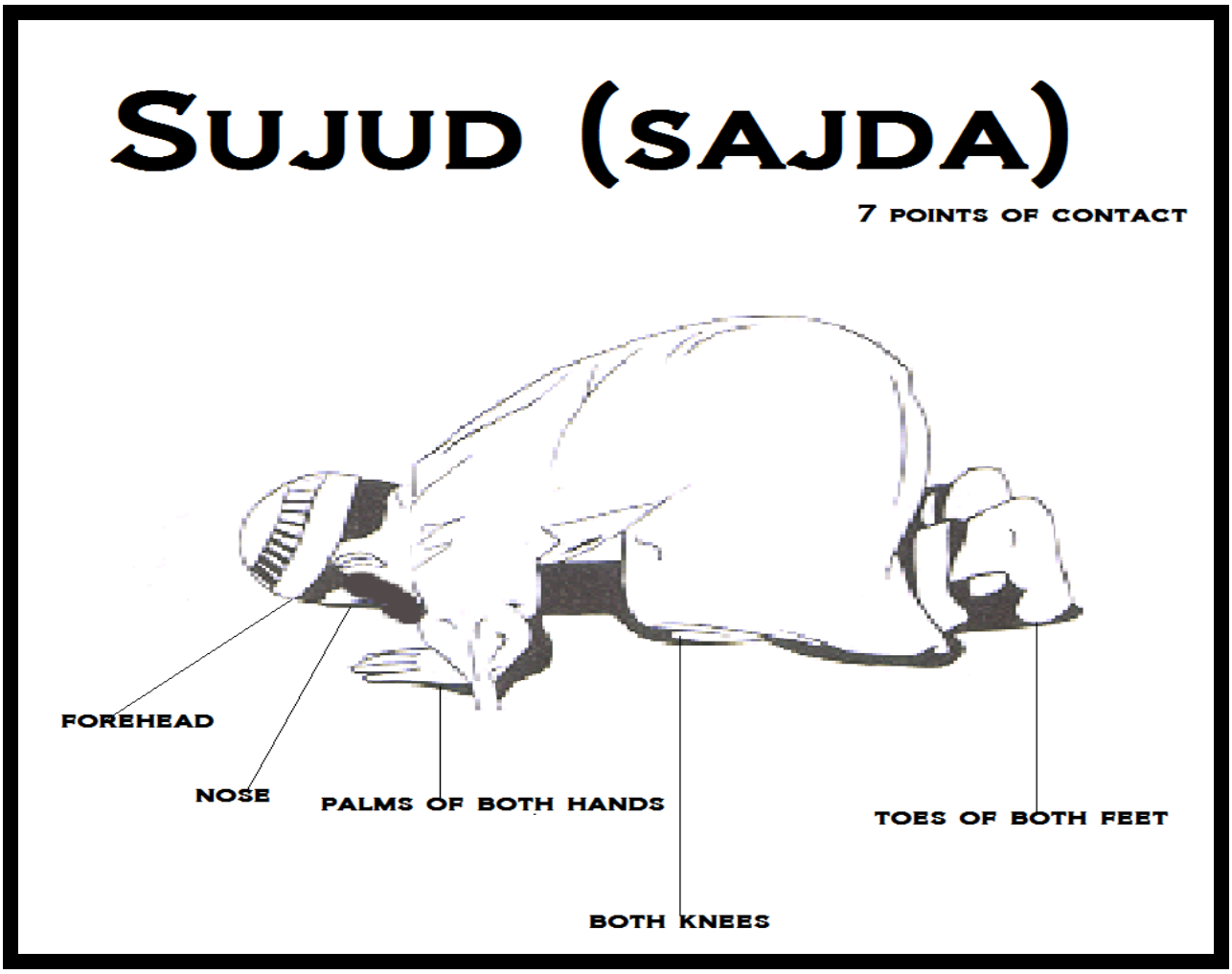
THE BACK SHOULD ALSO BE MADE STRAIGHT (FULLY ERECT)

BEND THE LEFT FOOT AND SITTING ON IT (INSIDE ANKLE), WHILE KEEPING THE RIGHT FOOT PROPPED UP (HEEL IN THE AIR AND THE TOES ON THE GROUND POINTING FORWARD TOWARDS THE QIBLAH).

While in jalsah, the palms of the hands should be positioned on the thighs and knees (the right palm on the right thigh and knee and the left palm on the left thigh and knee), while simultaneously bending the left foot and sitting on it (inside ankle), while keeping the right foot propped up (heel in the air and the toes on the ground pointing forward towards the Qiblah). The back and head should also be made straight (eyes positioned on the place of prostration).

The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ikrima reported: "..... **He (P.B.U.H.) used to say Takbir on prostrating and on raising his head from prostration**....." What is more, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "..... **prostrate calmly till you feel at ease and then raise (your head) and sit with Calmness till you feel at ease and then prostrate with calmness till you feel at ease in prostration and do the same (raise the head) in the whole of your prayer**." Furthermore, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abdullah bin Zubayr reports: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) sat in prayer, he placed the left foot between his thigh and calf and stretched the right foot and placed his left hand on his left thigh and his right hand on his right thigh**." Lastly, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn 'Ata' reports that Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi said: "..... **Then he (P.B.U.H.) would tuck his foot under his body and sit on it. Then he (P.B.U.H.) sat upright (in jalsah) until every bone returned to its place**.'"

17) Calmly pronounce the ninth takbir (Allahu Akbar) while in jalsah to initiate the second sajdah of the second rakah. As with all prostrations, care should be taken to ensure that seven points of contact are established with the ground.



Once seven points of contact are established with the ground during sajdah, calmly say, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three or more times in odd number units.

The evidence for the ruling of prostrating on seven bones or points of contact is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas narrated: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was ordered (by Allah) to prostrate on seven parts .... Those parts are: the forehead (along with the tip of nose), both hands, both knees,**

and the (toes of) both feet." Moreover, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Amr bin Ata reports: "**I was sitting with some of the companions of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) and we were discussing about the way of praying of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Abu Humaid As-Saidi said, 'I remember the prayer of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you.... In prostrations, he placed both his hands on the ground with the forearms away from the ground and away from his body, and his toes were facing the Qibla**...'" Regarding the manner of prostrating is the ahadith of Abu Dawud and Ibn Khuzaimah wherein it is reported: "**(In sujud), He (P.B.U.H.) would support himself on his palms [and spread them]',and 'put his fingers together**.'" Furthermore, the evidence for suplicating while in sujud is a hadith collected by Imam Muslim narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state).**'" Lastly, a hadith collected by Abu Dawud reports, supplicate in sujud by saying: "**Glory is to my Lord, the Most High**."

18) After calmly saying, "Subhana Rabbiy al-A`la (Glorified is my Lord, the highest/supreme) three times, once again, raise up from prostrating in sujud into a fully relaxed sitting (jalsah) position.

Jalsah position

Raise up from prostrating (sajdah) saying "Allahu Akbar" into a fully relaxed sitting position (jalsah) with the palms of the hands resting on the thighs and knees

The back should also be made straight (fully erect)

Bend the left foot and sitting on it (inside ankle), while keeping the right foot propped up (heel in the air and the toes on the ground pointing forward towards the Qiblah).

While in the second jalsah of the second rakah of salatul istikhara, again place the palms of the hands on top of the thighs and knees, while simultaneously bending the left foot and sitting on it (inside ankle), while keeping the right foot propped up (heel in the air and the toes on the ground pointing forward towards the Qiblah). Then pronounce the tenth takbir (Allahu Akbar), with the back and head being made straight, while the eyes remain fixed on the place of prostration.

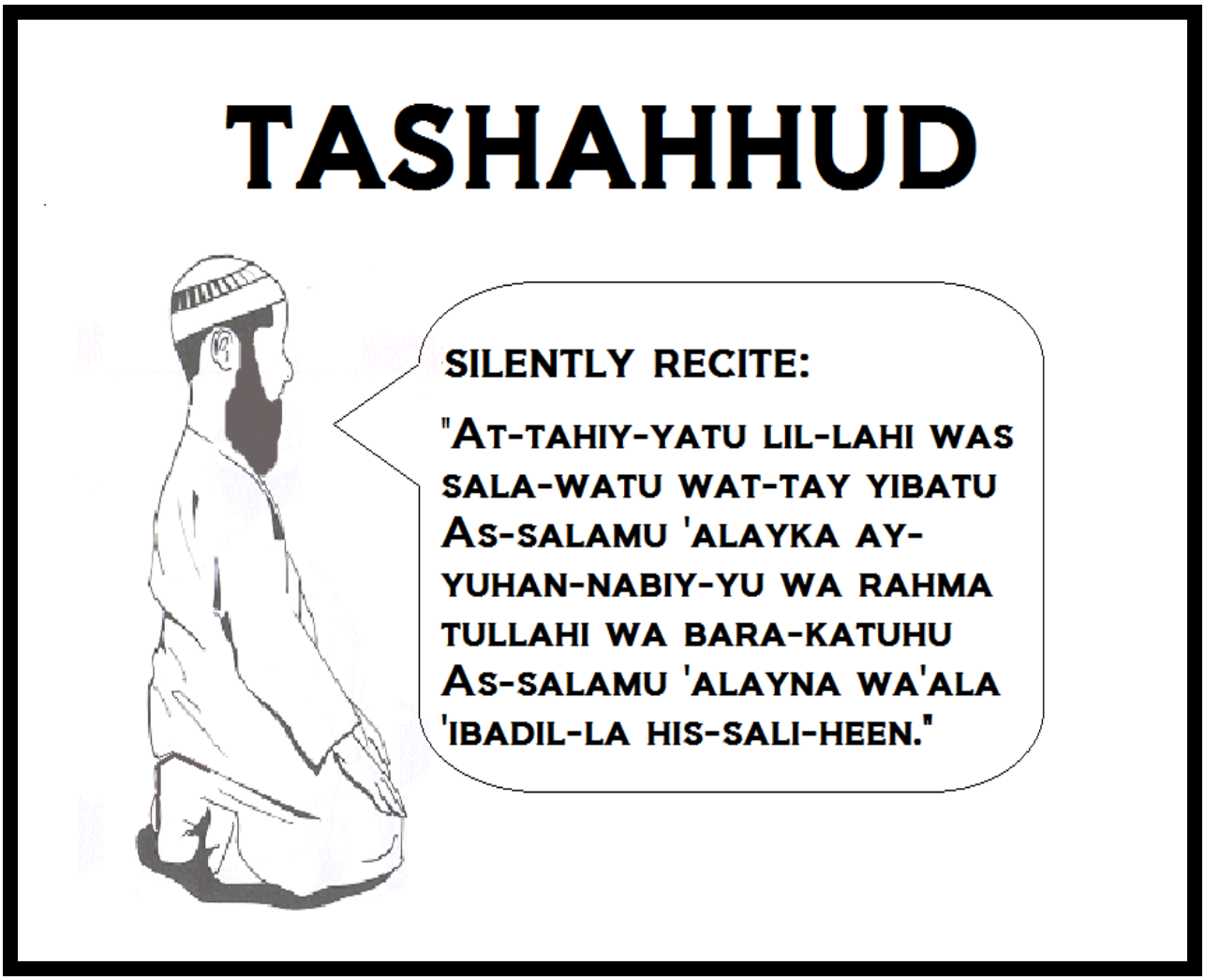
The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Ikrima reported: "..... **He (P.B.U.H.) used to say Takbir on prostrating and on raising his head from prostration**....." What is more, another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Abu Huraira reports: "..... **prostrate calmly till you feel at ease and then raise (your head) and sit with Calmness till you feel at ease and then prostrate with calmness till you feel at ease in prostration and do the same (raise the head) in the whole of your prayer**." Furthermore, a hadith collected by Imam Muslim that was narrated by Abdullah bin Zubayr reports: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) sat in prayer, he placed the left foot between his thigh and calf and stretched the right foot and placed his left hand on his left thigh and his right hand on his right thigh**." Lastly, a hadith in the collection of Abu Dawud that was narrated from Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn 'Ata' reports that Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi said: "..... **Then he (P.B.U.H.) would tuck his foot under his body and sit on it. Then he (P.B.U.H.) sat upright (in jalsah) until every bone returned to its place**.'"

19) After performing the second and final jalsah of the second rakah of salatul istikhara, one should then sit calmly in the Qad'ah position (sitting position of the second rakah) and sit on the inside of the left ankle while propping up

the right foot with the heel in the air and the toes facing the qiblah.

The evidence for this practice is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Muhammad bin 'Amr bin 'Ata' narrated that Abu Humaid As-Saidi reportedly said: "**I remember the prayer of Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) better than any one of you. ... On sitting in the second Rak'a he sat on his left foot and propped up the right one; and in the last Rak'a he pushed his left foot forward and kept the other foot propped up and sat over the buttocks.**"

20) While calmly sitting in the Qad'ah position, silently recite the tashahhud.


TASHAHHUD
SILENTLY RECITE:
"AT-TAHIY-YATU LIL-LAHI WAS SALA-WATU WAT-TAY YIBATU AS-SALAMU 'ALAYKA AY-YUHAN-NABIY-YU WA RAHMA TULLAHI WA BARA-KATUHU AS-SALAMU 'ALAYNA WA'ALA 'IBADIL-LA HIS-SALI-HEEN."

The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud reported: "**It pertains to the sunnah to utter the tashahhud quietly**."

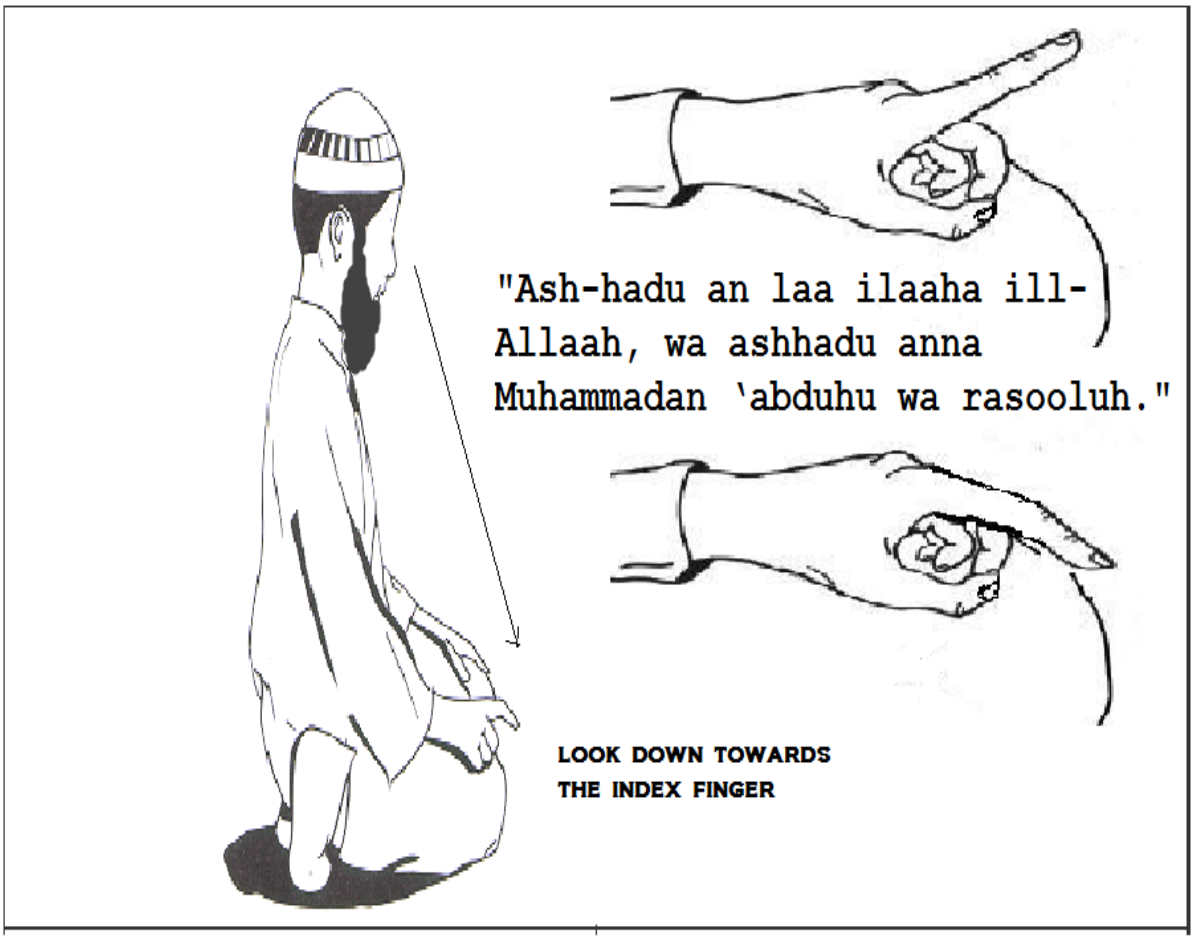
21) The tashahhud is performed by silently saying: **"At-tahiy-yatu lil-lahi was sala-watu wat-tay yibatu As-salamu 'alayka ay-yuhan-nabiy-yu wa rahma tullahi wa bara-katuhu As-salamu**

'alayna wa'ala 'ibadil-la his-sali-heen Ash hadu al-la ilaha il-lal lahu wa ash hadu an-na Muhammadan 'ab-duhu wa rasuluh; which translates into English as "All worships are for Allah. Allah's peace be upon you, O Prophet, and His mercy and blessings. Peace be on us and on all righteous servants of Allah. I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

The evidence for this practice is a hadith collected by Bukhari wherein Abdullah narrated: **"When we prayed with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) we used to say: 'As-Salam be on Allah from His worshipers, As-Salam be on Gabriel, As-Salam be on Michael, As-Salam be on so-and-so. 'When the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) finished his prayer, he faced us and said, 'Allah Himself is As-Salam (Peace), so when one sits in the prayer, one should say: 'At-Tahiyatu-li llahi Was-Salawatu, Wat-Taiyibatu, As-Salamu'Alaika aiyuhan-Nabiyyu wa Rah-matul-lahi wa Barakatuhu, As-Salamu'Alaina wa'ala'Ibadillahi assalihin, for if he says so, then it will be for all the pious slave of Allah in the Heavens and the Earth. (Then he should say),'Ash-hadu an la ilaha illalllahu wa ash-hadu anna Muhammadan'Abduhu wa rasulu-hu,'and then he can choose whatever speech (invocation) he wishes.'"**

22) While reciting the tashahhud, stop after saying "ibadil-la his-sali-heen;" and with the palm of the right hand positioned on the right thigh and knee, raise the index finger in a pointing manner while making a circle with the thumb and middle finger (connect the tip of the middle finger with the tip of the thumb); and say, **"Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ʻabduhu wa rasooluh."** Then lower the index finger after saying this.

POINT THE INDEX FINGER OF THE RIGHT HAND DURING THE TASHAHHUD WHEN "ASH HADU AL-LA ILAHA IL-LAL LAHU" IS RECITED.



The evidence for the manner in which the hands are to be position on the thighs/knees and how the fingers should be

positioned in certain phases of the tashahhud is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein 'Abdullah b. Zubair reportedly said: **"When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) sat for supplication, (i.e., in the tashahhud position of salat), he placed his right hand on his right thigh and his left hand on his left thigh, and pointed with his forefinger (index finger), and placed his thumb on his (milddle) finger (tip of thumb connected to the tip of the middle finger), and covered his knee with the palm of his left hand."** Furthermore, the evidence for what should be recited while sitting in the tashahhud position of salat and when to actually raise the index finger is the hadith collected by Ibn Majah that was narrated by Abdullah ibn Idris al-Awdi who reportedly said: **"He had joined his thumb and middle finger to make a ring, and raised the finger between them to make duah (supplication) in the declaration of faith (of the tashahhud; i.e., "Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan ʿabduhu wa rasooluh")."**

It is also worth mentioning that the scholars have not reached a consensus regarding the ideal manner of moving the index finger of the right hand during the tashahhud. Some maintain that the index finger should only be moved to engage in a pointing position; while others are of the belief that the finger should be moved vigorously. There is evidence from the

ahadith to support both positions; therefore, one will not be sinful for utilizing the method which suits their reasoning.

The evidence for moving the finger is a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud wherein Wa'il bin Hujr allegedly said: "**...then he closed his fingers and made a ring, then he raised his finger and I saw him moving it and making duaa with it, then I came in a time and when it was cold and so I saw the people with cloaks upon them moving their hands beneath their clothes due to the cold.**" Likewise, the evidence for pointing the index finger and not moving it is another hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Ibn az-Zubair was reported to have said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) would point with his (index) finger while supplicating, and he would not move it.**" With this being said, it is also important to note that according to Shaykh Adh-Dhabee, "As for the hadith of Abdullah Ibn Az-Zubair which mentioned that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to point with his finger when he made duah and not move it, has an unauthentic isnad due to the fact that it contains Muhammad Ibn 'Ajalah, who is of average memory." Adh-Dhabee further claims that, "Any additional ahadith by Muhammad Ibn 'Ajalah are not acceptable if they contradict anyone who is more reliable than him. Muhammad Ibn 'Ajalah narration becomes shaadh (an unreliable uncharacteristic against the norm); and as a result, Muslim does not report from him except to endorse

something. Therefore, even if the hadith of Abdullah ibn az-Zubair was established, it is a denial and the hadith which Waail ibn Hujr is affirming. Thus, in this instance, that which affirms is given precedence over that which denies, since the one who affirms has an increase in knowledge."

Contrary to the above mentioned position of Shaykh Adh-Dhabee, Al-Bayhaqi maintains that even if one were to assume that the narration of Wa'il bin Hujr which mentions moving the finger is authentic, the movement here would mean pointing and not repetitive movement (in order to make it conform with the previously mentioned rigorously-authenticated narration). Imam Nawawi agrees in the Majmu' (3.454) with the conclusion of Al-Bayhaqi.

It is also important to note that according to Imam Nawawi, the hadith narrated by Ibn Umar which reports that he heard from the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that "**moving of the finger during prayer terrifies the Devil**," is not authentic. Imam Nawawi also adds a citation from Al-Bayhaqi wherein he reportedly said, "Al-Waqidi was alone in narrating this, and it is weak.'"

Shaikh Muqbil is also reported to have said, "The hadith of Wa'il bin Hujr is Hasan (good). It proves pointing with the finger. However, in reference to moving it, then the only one who narrated that act was Zaa'idah bin Qudaamah and he has

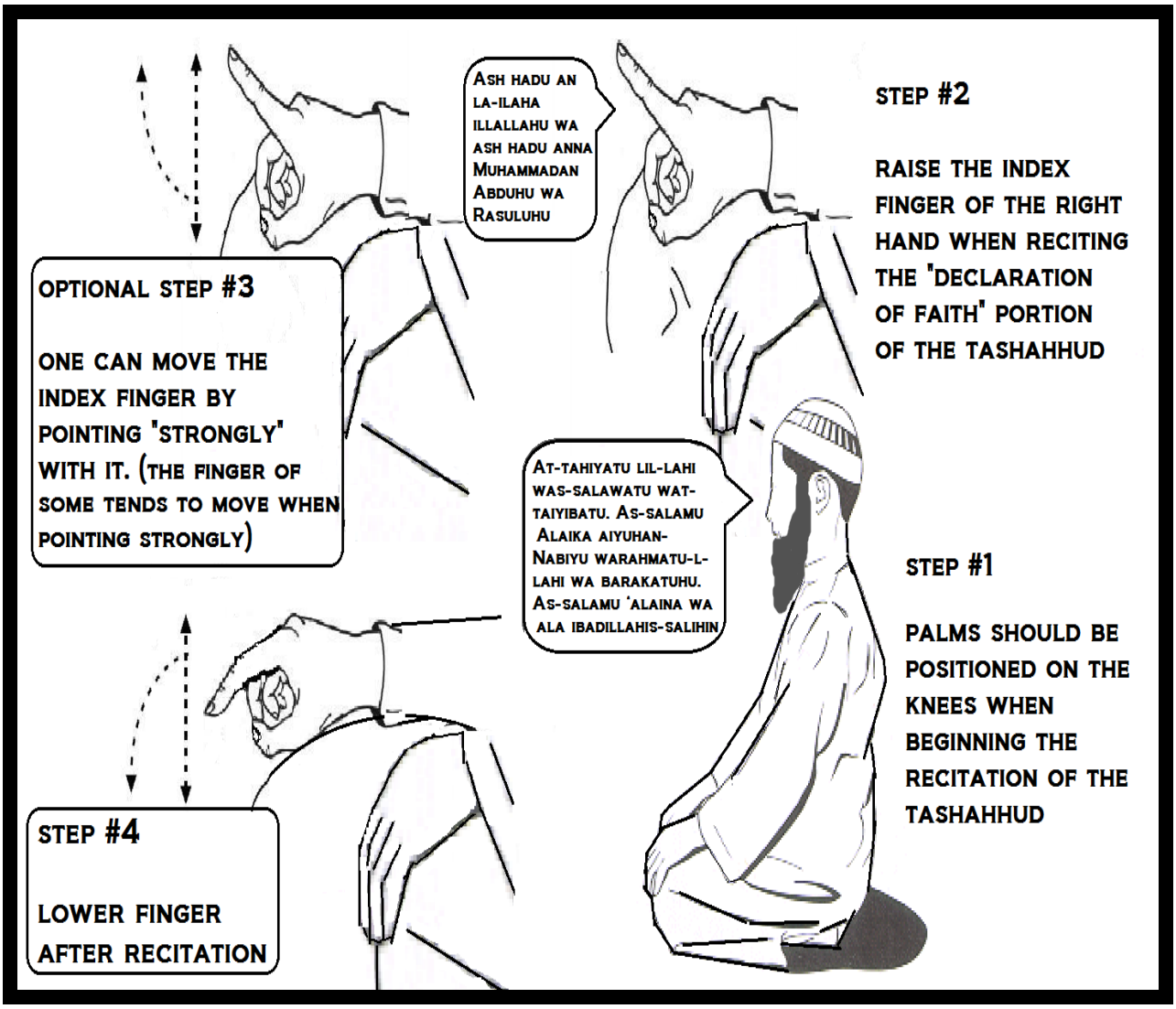
contradicted 13 narrators (who all narrated this same hadeeth from Waa'il); namely, Bishr bin Al-Mufadhdhal with Abu Dawud, Sufyaan bin 'Uyainah with An-Nasaa'ee, Ath-Thawree with An-Nasaa'ee, 'Abdul-Waahid bin Ziyaad with Ahmad, Shu'bah with Ahmad, Zuhayr bin Mu'aawiyah with Ahmad, 'Abdullaah bin Idrees with Ibn Khuzaymah, Khaalid bin 'Abdillaah At-Tahhaan with Al-Bayhaqee, Muhammad bin Fudhayl with Ibn Khuzaymah, Abul-Ahwas Sallaam bin Sulaym with At-Tayaalisee, Aboo 'Awaanah and Gheelaan bin Jaami' who were both quoted by Al-Bayhaqee as mentioning it (i.e. this hadith without moving the finger), and all of them reported it from 'Aasim bin Kulayb (who narrated it from his father, from Waa'il) and none of them mentioned moving (the finger) in it." Shaikh Muqbil further stated, "It was also reported from the narrations of the companions 'Abdullaah bin Az-Zubayr, 'Abdullaah bin 'Umar, Aboo Humayd As-Saa'idee, Aboo Hurayrah, Sa'd bin Abee Waqqaas, Ibn 'Abbaas, and Khaffaaf bin Eemaa', no mentioning of moving (the finger)." In conclusion, Shaikh Muqbil adopted the basic principle that a Ziyaadah (extra added wording) which contradicts what others who were more reliable or more numerous in their number reported is Shaaththh, and thus unaccepted; however, Shaikh Al-Albaanee considered this a case of Ziyaadatuth-Thiqah (the additional information added in a narration of one of the narrators who is reliable that is not found in the other versions of the hadith); because, Al-

Albaanee did not consider the additional wording, "and he would move it" as contradictory because he says that pointing does not cancel out movement. Shaykh Albani also maintained that the hadith of Wa'il bin Hujr is a clear proof for the pointing and moving of the index-finger, and said: "This hadeeth gives the benefit of tahreek (continuous movement); this is the Madhab of the Malikis and this is upon Haqq (truth)."

The methods of pointing the index finger in tashahhud according to the four Madhabs:

- **The Hanafis** say that the finger should be raised when saying "Laa ilaaha ill-Allah (There is no god except Allah)" and it should be lowered when saying, "ill-Allah (except Allah)."
- **The Shafiis** say that it should be raised when saying "ill-Allah."
- According to **the Malikis**, as well as the later Hanafi scholars, the index finger should be pointed throughout the duration of the tashahhud.
- **The Hanbalis** say that one should point with the finger when saying the name of Allah, without moving it.

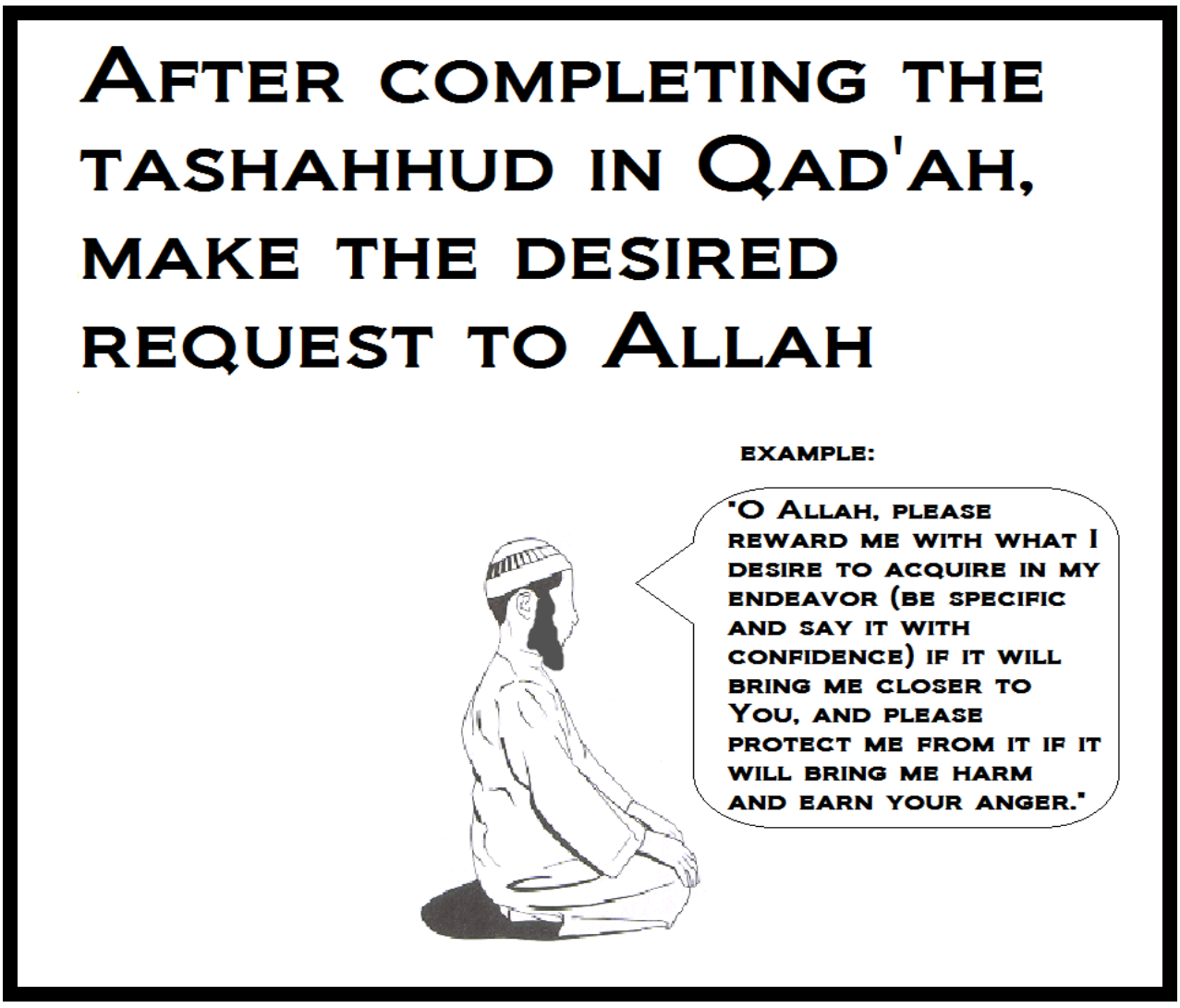
The method of pointing the index finger in tashahhud based on the statements of ahadith:


ASH HADU AN LA-ILAHA ILLALLAHU WA ASH HADU ANNA MUHAMMADAN ABDUHU WA RASULUHU
STEP #2
RAISE THE INDEX FINGER OF THE RIGHT HAND WHEN RECITING THE 'DECLARATION OF FAITH' PORTION OF THE TASHAHHUD
OPTIONAL STEP #3
ONE CAN MOVE THE INDEX FINGER BY POINTING 'STRONGLY' WITH IT. (THE FINGER OF SOME TENDS TO MOVE WHEN POINTING STRONGLY)
AT-TAHIYATU LIL-LAHI WAS-SALAWATU WAT-TAIYIBATU. AS-SALAMU ALAIKA AIYUHAN-NABIYU WARAHMATU-L-LAHI WA BARAKATUHU. AS-SALAMU 'ALAINA WA ALA IBADILLAHIS-SALIHIN
STEP #1
PALMS SHOULD BE POSITIONED ON THE KNEES WHEN BEGINNING THE RECITATION OF THE TASHAHHUD
STEP #4
LOWER FINGER AFTER RECITATION

The evidence for the above method of what should be recited while sitting in the tashahhud position of salat and when to actually raise the index finger is the hadith collected by Ibn Majah that was narrated by Abdullah ibn Idris al-Awdi who was reported to have said: "**He had joined his thumb and middle**

finger to make a ring, and raised the finger between them to make duah (supplication) in the declaration of faith (of the tashahhud; i.e., "Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha ill-Allaah, wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluh")."

23) After completing the tashahhud in Qad'ah, make the desired request to Allah to either reward you with what you desire to acquire in your endeavor if it will bring you closer to him or to protect you from it if it will bring you harm.


AFTER COMPLETING THE TASHAHHUD IN QAD'AH, MAKE THE DESIRED REQUEST TO ALLAH
EXAMPLE:
"O ALLAH, PLEASE REWARD ME WITH WHAT I DESIRE TO ACQUIRE IN MY ENDEAVOR (BE SPECIFIC AND SAY IT WITH CONFIDENCE) IF IT WILL BRING ME CLOSER TO YOU, AND PLEASE PROTECT ME FROM IT IF IT WILL BRING ME HARM AND EARN YOUR ANGER."

The evidence for this practice is a hadith collected by Imam Muslim wherein Abu Huraira reported: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said: 'The nearest a servant comes to his Lord is when he is prostrating himself, so make supplication (in this state)**.'" Further evidence for this practice is found in a hadith collected in the Muwatta of Imam Malik, wherein Yahya related from Malik from Nafi that Abdullah ibn Umar used to say the tashahhud saying: "**In the name of Allah. Greetings belong to Allah. Prayers belong to Allah. Pure actions belong to Allah. Peace be on the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and on the slaves of Allah who are salihun. I testify that there is no god except Allah. I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. He used to say this after the first two rakas and he would make supplication with whatever seemed fit to him when the tashahhud was completed**." Lastly, the hadith of Imam Muslim that was narrated by Ibn Mas'ud reports: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) taught him the tashahud and then said, 'Then choose whatever you wish to ask (of Allah)**.'" Therefore, since the prayer of Istikharah is being performed, the following duah should be recited: "O Allah! I consult You, for You have all knowledge, and appeal to You to support me with Your Power and I ask for Your Bounty, for You are able to do all things while I am not, and You are all-knowing while I am not; and You are the Knower of the Unseen. O

Allah! If You ordain for this matter (name your matter) to be good for me both at present and in my future, (or in my religion), in my life and in the Hereafter, then reward me with it and make it easy for me, and bestow Your blessings on me in that matter. O Allah! likewise, if You ordain that this matter is not beneficial for me in my religion, in my life and the Hereafter (or at present or in the future), then divert me from it and choose for me what is good wherever it may be, and make me be pleased with it." The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Jabir bin Abdullah reportedly said: **"The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to teach us the way of doing Istikhara (Istikhara means to ask Allah to guide one to the right sort of action concerning any job or a deed), in all matters as he taught us the Suras of the Quran. He said, 'If anyone of you thinks of doing any job he should offer a two Rakat prayer other than the compulsory ones and say (after the prayer): -- 'Allahumma inni astakhiruka bi'ilmika, Wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratika, Wa as'alaka min fadlika al-'azlm Fa-innaka taqdiru Wala aqdiru, Wa ta'lamu Wala a'lamu, Wa anta 'allamu l-ghuyub. Allahumma, in kunta ta'lam anna hadha-l-amra Khairun li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or 'ajili amri wa'ajilihi) Faqdirhu wa yas-sirhu li thumma barik li Fihi, Wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hadha-lamra shar-run li fi dini wa ma'ashi wa'aqibati amri (or fi'ajili amri wa ajilihi) Fasrifhu anni was-**

rifni anhu. Waqdir li al-khaira haithu kana Thumma ardini bihi.' (O Allah! I ask guidance from Your knowledge, And Power from Your Might and I ask for Your great blessings. You are capable and I am not. You know and I do not and You know the unseen. O Allah! If You know that this job is good for my religion and my subsistence and in my Hereafter--(or said: If it is better for my present and later needs)--Then please ordain it for me and make it easy for me to get, And then bless me in it, and if You know that this job is harmful to me in my religion and subsistence and in the Hereafter--(or said: If it is worse for my present and later needs)--Then keep it away from me and let me be away from it. And ordain for me whatever is good for me, and make me satisfied with it). The Prophet added that then the person should name (mention) his need."

Special note:

Do not raise the hands in an attempt to make duah to Allah because doing so in salat is an innovation that is not supported by the Quran or any ahadith. In fact, when the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) raised his hands in duah, he did so in a manner that exposed his armpits; which is the total opposite of those who cup their hands in duah after completing the tashahhud. Nevertheless, this method of duah is not to be performed while in salat; it is mainly performed in special

invocations such as after performing the Witr prayer, praying for rain, and invoking Allah against enemies.

The evidence for not raising the hands in duah either during or after the tashahhud is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Ali reportedly said: "**When the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) prayed, the last thing he would say between the tashahud and the tasleem was, 'O Allah, forgive my past and later sins, what was in private and what was in public, and what I have been extravagant in. You are more knowledgeable of it than I. You are the Promoter and the Retarder. There is no god except You.**'"

Therefore, after invoking Allah before the tasleem, it would be impractical to repeat the invocation afterwards by raising the hands; especially, since there is no hadith to support doing so. Furthermore, additional evidence for the impermissibility of raising the hands before or after the tasleem is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Anas Bin Malik is reported to have said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) never raised his hands for any invocation except for that of Istisqa' (invocation for rain) and he used to raise them so much that the whiteness of his armpits became visible**."

In view of this hadith, it is important to note that what is narrated is the viewpoint of Anas Bin Malik who obviously did not observe the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) raising his hands when performing Witr prayer or invoking Allah against his enemies. Nevertheless, another hadith of Bukhari provides evidence for raising the hands during the witr prayer. The hadith in question that was narrated by Abu Uthmaan an-Nahdi reads as follows: "**Umar would perform the Qunoot (of Witr prayer) with us in the early morning prayer, and would raise his hands, so much that the side of his body under his arms would be seen**." Thus, as this hadith states, Umar (RA) is being observed and not the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.), which provides justification for the statement of Anas Bin Malik who is

documented as saying that he did not observe the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) raising his hands when performing Witr prayer or invoking Allah against his enemies; i.e., Anas Bin Malik may have observed others raising their hands, but not the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.); and Allah knows best!

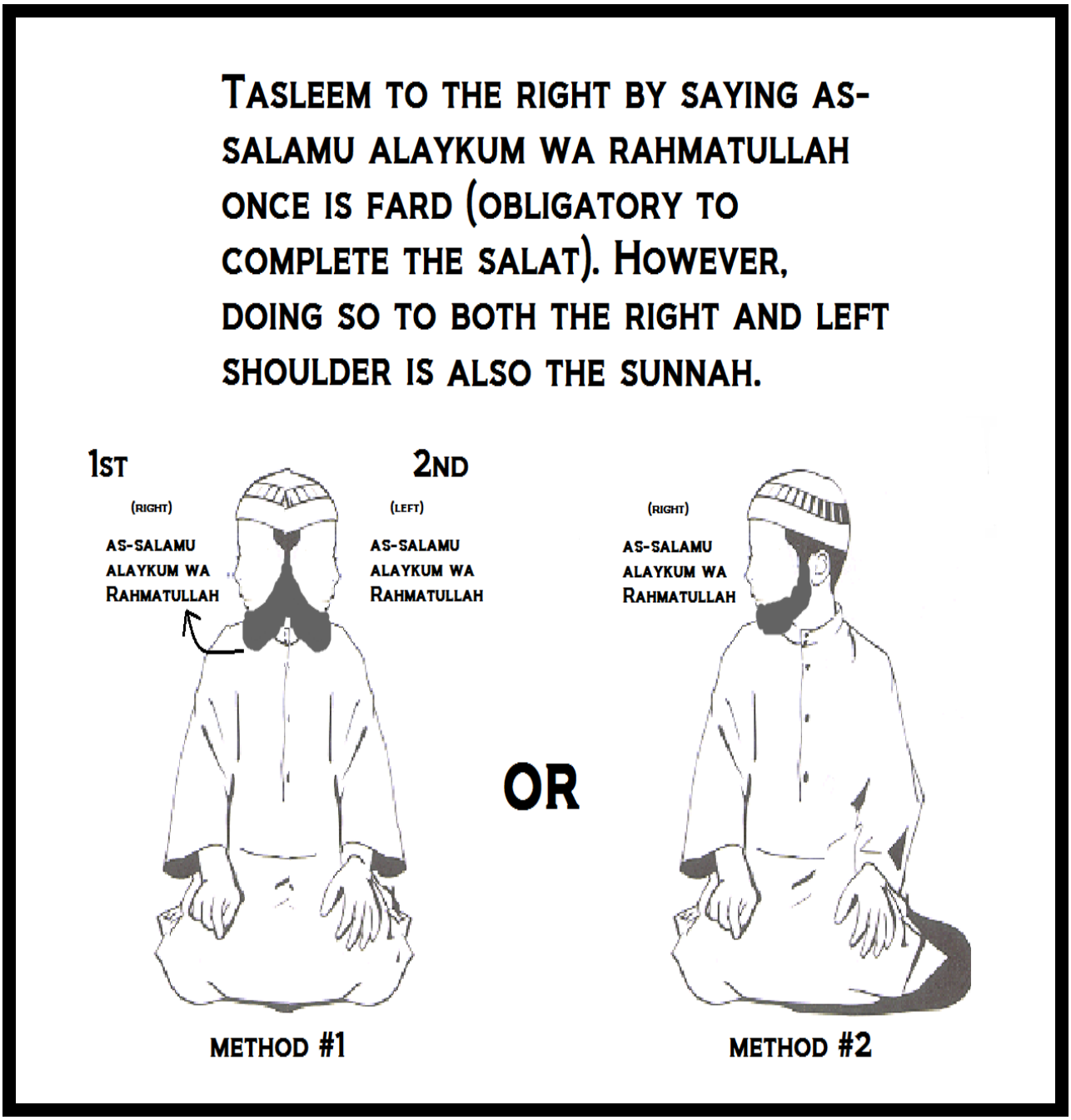
It is also worth mentioning that the raising of the hands during the Qunoot of Witr for a problem that was afflicting the Muslim community is also an established practice from the sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.); because, he is recorded as making duah against the Mushrikeen (pagans) who killed seventy reciters of the Quran. The evidence for the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) practice of invoking Allah against the enemies of the Muslims is the hadith of Ahmad wherein Anas bin Malik reportedly said: "**I never ever saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) painfully agitated about anything as I saw him agitated over them. Indeed I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) in the early morning prayer (Witr) raising his hands and he supplicated against those who killed them.**" Therefore, since this depiction of the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) raising his hands is also narrated by Anas bin Malik, one can deduce that this incident occurred after his previous narration wherein he stated that the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) never raised his hands for any invocation except for that of Istisqa' (invocation for rain).

- Duah is the weapon of the believers; and as such, when one invokes Allah during duah, it should be a personal act of worship wherein one asks for forgiveness, protection, etc., regarding personal matters; and not a mere ritual performed as a societal norm.

24) After completing the tashahud and before performing the tasleem invoke Allah seeking refuge from the punishment of death, the grave, the afflictions of Ad-dajjal, this life, debt, and matters of the religion.

The evidence for this instruction is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Aisha (RA) was reported to have said: **"Allah's Apostle (P.B.U.H.) used to invoke Allah in the prayer saying 'Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min adhabil-qabri, wa a'udhu bika min fitnatil-masihi d-dajjal, wa a'udhu bika min fitnatil-mahya wa fitnatil-mamati. Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-ma thami wal-maghrami. (O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the punishment of the grave, and from the afflictions of Ad-dajjal, and from the afflictions of life and death. O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the sins and from being in debt).' Somebody said to him, 'Why do you so frequently seek refuge with Allah from being in debt?' The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied, 'A person in debt tells lies whenever he speaks, and breaks promises whenever he makes (them).'"**

25) Tasleem (Taslim) - End the salat by saying: "As-salamu alaykum wa Rahmatullah" over the right shoulder either once, which is fard (compulsory), or say: "As-salamu alaykum wa Rahmatullah" over the left shoulder as well. This method is also regarded as the sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.).


TASLEEM TO THE RIGHT BY SAYING AS-SALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAH ONCE IS FARD (OBLIGATORY TO COMPLETE THE SALAT). HOWEVER, DOING SO TO BOTH THE RIGHT AND LEFT SHOULDER IS ALSO THE SUNNAH.
1ST
(RIGHT)
AS-SALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAH
2ND
(LEFT)
AS-SALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAH
OR
(RIGHT)
AS-SALAMU ALAYKUM WA RAHMATULLAH
METHOD #1
METHOD #2

The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Ali Ibn Abu Talib narrated that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) reportedly said: "**The key to prayer is purification; its beginning is takbir and its end is taslim**." Furthermore, evidence illustrating the manner in which the tasleem is to be performed is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi wherein Ibn Mas`ud reportedly said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to give the salutation to his right and left sides saying: Peace be upon you, and mercy of Allah twice, until the whiteness of his cheek was seen**." In view of this hadith, it is important to note that performing tasleem to the right and left and saying "As-Salamu 'Alaikum Warah matullah (Peace be upon you, and mercy of Allah)" is the most frequent practice of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and his companions. However, there is evidence which proves that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) actually performed tasleem only once, to the right side only. The evidence for this occasional practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Aisha (RA) is reported to have said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to say Taslim once while facing straight and leaning slightly to the right side**."

Methods of performing the tasleem:

1) **As-Salamu 'alaykum to the right slightly**

The evidence for the practice of saying "As-Salamu 'alaykum" slightly to the right is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Aisha

(RA) is reported to have said: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to say Taslim once while facing straight and leaning slightly to the right side**."

2) **As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rah matullaah to the right, as-Salamu 'alaykum to the left**

The evidence for this practice is found in *The Abridgment of The Prophet's Prayer Described* by Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani. The hadith in question collected by Ahmad with a saheeh sanad reads as follows: "**When he (P.B.U.H.) said: 'Peace and Allah's Mercy be on you to his right, he would sometimes shorten the greeting on his left to: Peace be on you**.'"

3) **As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rah matullaah to both sides**

The evidence for this practice is a hadith in the collection of Bukhari wherein Abdullah narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) prayed ..... and finished his prayers with Taslim (by turning his face to right and left saying: 'As-Salamu'Alaikum-Wa-rah-matullah").**'"

4) **As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rah matullaahi wa barakaatuh to the right, and as-Salamu 'alaykum wa rah matullaah to the left**

The evidence for this practice is found in *The Abridgment of The Prophet's Prayer Described* by Shaykh Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani. The hadith in question collected by Abu Dawud & Ibn

Khuzaimah (1/87/2) with a saheeh sanad reads as follows: "**Sometimes, he (P.B.U.H.) would add to the greeting on the right: '... and His blessings (be on you)**.'"

The methods of performing tasleem (taslim) in salat according to the four Madhabs:

1) **Malaki Madhab:** only says "as-salamu alaikum wa rah matullah" once when turning the head to the right.
2) **Shafi'i Madhab:** says "as-salamu alaikum wa rah matullah" to the right and left. Also, considers pronouncing the tasleem once as being sufficient. (Ash-Shafiee was reported to have said: "If you wish you can give one Tasleem, and if you wish you can give two Tasleems.")
3) **Hanbali Madhab:** It is obligatory to say "as-salamu alaikum wa rah matullah" twice (to the right and left)
4) **Hanafi Madhab:** says "as-salamu alaikum wa rah matullah" to the right and left, but "does not consider it obligatory;" only an established sunnah. Furthermore, the Hanafi Madhab also considers pronouncing the tasleem "once" as being sufficient.

To reiterate, when performing the tasleem, one should at least do so by facing straight and leaning slightly to the right with a single salam (As-Salamu 'alaykum) or to completely turn the face towards the right and left and say As-Salamu 'alaykum wa rah matullaah to both sides in a manner that will enable an onlooker to clearly see each cheek. (those on the right will see the right cheek and vise versa). Furthermore, there is no authentic evidence from the Quran or sunnah of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) to support any of the following actions:

- **Pausing between each tasleem and uttering something**
- **Nodding or bouncing the head before or during each tasleem**
- **Looking up to the qiblah direction before each tasleem**
- **Rolling one's head to each side while dipping the shoulders**
- **Beginning the tasleem by looking straight ahead and later turning the head near the end of the phrase**

Suplications after tasleem:

If one desires, they are permitted to make a personal duah after the tasleem. However, whether it is permissible to supplicate after the tasleem audibly or silently is a matter in which the scholars have not reached a consensus. The evidence

presented by those who support the opinion that supplications should be recited aloud, such as Al-Tabari, Ibn Hazm, and Shaykh al-Islam (Ibn Taymiyah), is a hadith collected by Imam Muslim wherein Abu Ma'bad, the freed slave of Ibn Abbas, narrated that Ibn Abbas allegedly said to him: "**People used to raise their voices in dhikr when they finished an obligatory prayer at the time of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Ibn ʻAbbas further said: 'I used to know when they had finished (the prayer) by that, when I heard it.**'" A similiar report is found in the collection of Bukhari wherein Ibn Abbas is reported to have said: "**I used to realize that the prayer had finished when I heard the sound of Takbeer.**" Furthermore, Imam Nawawi allegedly wrote is his explanation of Sahih Muslim that the Hadith of Ibn Abbas is an evidence for those scholars who recommend that the takbeer and the words of remembrance should be in a loud voice when uttered after the obligatory prayers; i.e., saying Allahu-Akbar and the dhikr of Subhana-Allah (Glory be to Allah), Al-hamdulillah (Praise be to Allah), and Allahu-Akbar (Allah is the greatest). However, other scholars such as Imam Shafi'i and the vast majority are of the opinion that supplicating the words of remembrance aloud after the tasleem is undesirable; maintaining that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) merely raised his voice to teach the characteristic of the dhikr, and did not continue doing so as an established practice.

The rationale behind not reciting supplication aloud is that by doing so as an established practice actually conflicts with the detailed directive from Surah Al-A'raf (7:205) of the Quran which reads: **"And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are not heedful."** Furthermore, Imam Shafi'i is also recorded as saying: "My view is that the Imam and the person praying behind him should remember Allah after they have finish praying, but they should recite dhikr in a low voice unless he is an Imam who is to be learned from, in which case he should recite in a loud voice until he thinks that it has been learned from him, then he should recite quietly; because, Allah says in Surah Al-Isra (17:110) of the Quran: **'Say: 'Call upon Allah, or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Neither speak thy Prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between;'** meaning, supplication. In addition, **"Neither speak thy Prayer aloud"** means do not raise your voice and **"Nor speak it in a low tone"** means, so low that you cannot hear yourself; and Allah knows best." With this being said, it is also important to note that according to fatwa (83390) from Islamweb.net, the act of supplicating aloud is only narrated from Ibn Abbas.

Nevertheless, according to fatwa (87768) from Islamqa.com, "As for the argument that reciting out loud is disapproved because of the verse **"And do thou (O reader!) Bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul, with humility and in reverence, without loudness in words, in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are not heedful"** (Al-A'raf 7:205),' we say: 'The one who was enjoined to remember his Lord within himself, humbly and with fear, was the same one who used to recite dhikr out loud following obligatory prayers. Does the one who says this know better what Allah meant than His Messenger (P.B.U.H.) did? Or does he believe that the Messenger (P.B.U.H.) knew what was meant but went against it? Moreover, the verse speaks of dhikr at the beginning and end of the day ('in the mornings and in the afternoons'), not the dhikr that is prescribed following prayers. In his Tafseer, Ibn Katheer interpreted reciting out loud as meaning too loud or extremely loud. Furthermore, as for the argument that reciting out loud is disapproved because of the words of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.): 'O people, take it easy,' the one who said 'O people, take it easy' is the same one who used to recite dhikr out loud following the prescribed prayers. There is a place for this and a place for that, and truly following means following every text when appropriate. Moreover, the context of the phrase 'take it easy' indicates that they used to raise their voices in a manner that

caused them hardship, hence he said 'take it easy,' i.e., be kind to yourselves and do not exhaust yourselves; because, there should be no hardship or undue effort in reciting dhikr out loud."

26) Tasbih/tasbeeh (dhikr to Allah). It is encouraged that one should perform dhikr to Allah after completing each of the five obligatory salat by counting the finger joints of the right hand (left is also permissible) or by using misbaha (prayer beads) to say subhan-Allah (glory be to Allah) 33 times, Al-hamdu-lillah (praise be to Allah) 33 times, and Allahu-Akbar (Allah is the greatest) 33 times; and complete the process (the 100th dhikr) by saying: "La ilaha illallahu, wahdahu la sharika lahu, lahul-mulku wa lahul-hamdu, wa Huwa `ala kulli shai'in Qadir." This translates into English as, "There is no true god except Allah. He is One and He has no partner with Him. His is the sovereignty and His is the praise, and He is Omnipotent."

The evidence for this directive is the hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Abu Hurayrah reportedly said: **"The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'Whoever glorifies Allah (says Subhaan Allah) thirty-three times immediately after each prayer, and praises Allah (says Al-hamdu Lillaah) thirty-three times, and magnifies Allah (says Allahu akbar) thirty-three times, this makes ninety-**

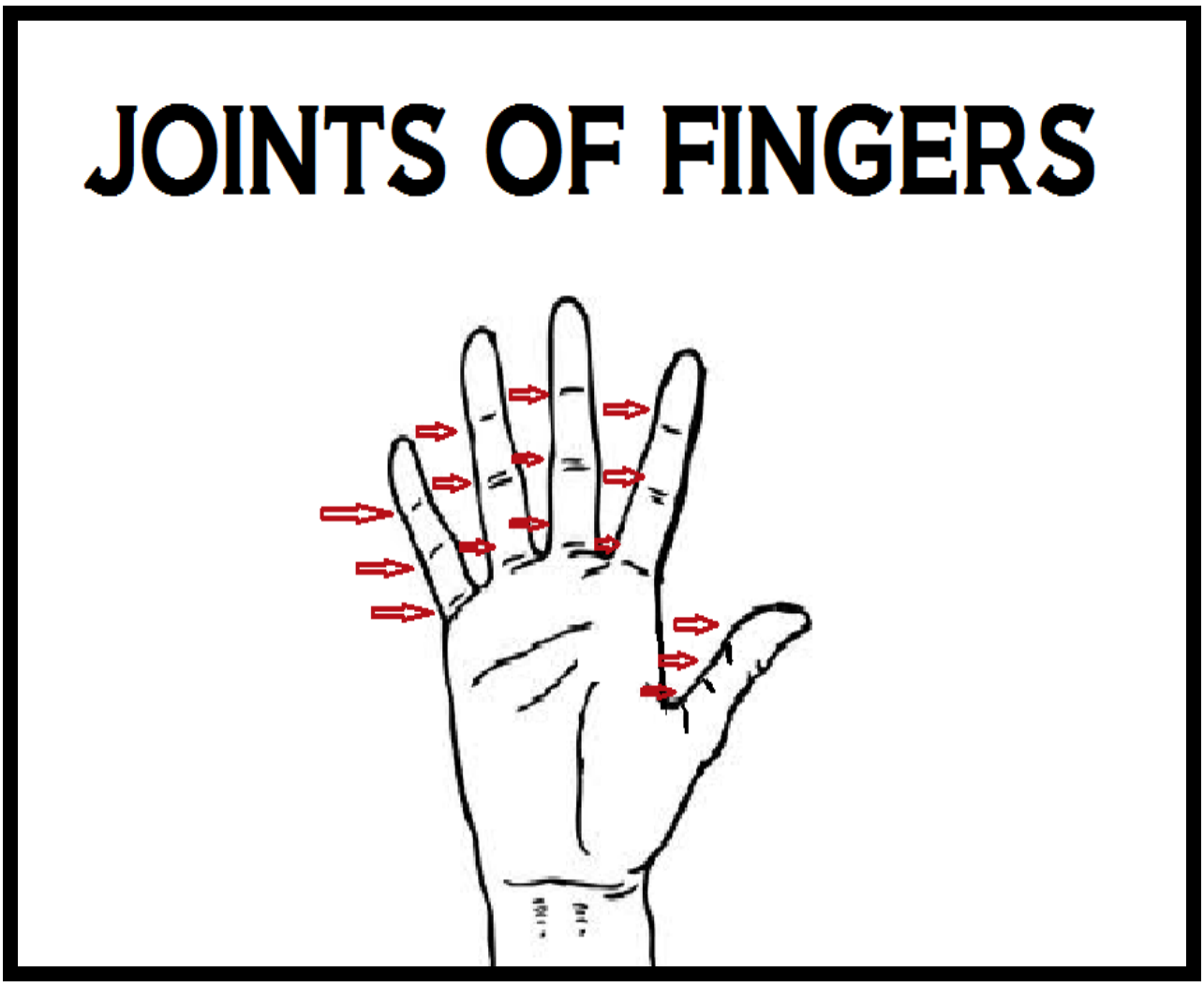
nine, then to complete one hundred says Laa ilaaha ill-Allah wahdahu laa shareeka lahu, lahu'l-mulk wa lahu'l-hamd wa huwa 'ala kulli shay'in qadeer (There is no god except Allaah Alone, with no partner, His is the power and His is the praise, and He is Able to do all things) – his sins will be forgiven even if they are like the foam of the sea.'" Additional evidence for this practice is found in another hadith of Imam Muslim wherein Ka'b bin 'Ujrah (RA) reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) said, 'There are some words, the reciters of which will never be disappointed. These are: Tasbih [saying 'Subhan-Allah' (Allah is free from imperfection)], thirty-three times, Tahmid [saying 'Al-hamdu lillah' (praise be to Allah)] thirty-three times, and Takbir [saying 'Allahu Akbar' (Allah is The Greatest)] thirty-four times; and these should be recited after the conclusion of every prescribed prayer**.'" Furthermore, there is an alternate method for performing dhikr wherein one merely says Subhaan Allah ten times immediately after each prayer, Al-hamdu Lillaah ten times, and Allahu akbar ten times. The evidence for this practice is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Abd-Allaah ibn Amr (RA) narrated: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)said: 'There are two qualities, no Muslim man acquires them but he will enter Paradise, and they are simple and easy. He should glorify Allah (say Subhaan Allah) ten times immediately after each prayer, and praise Him (say Al-hamdu**

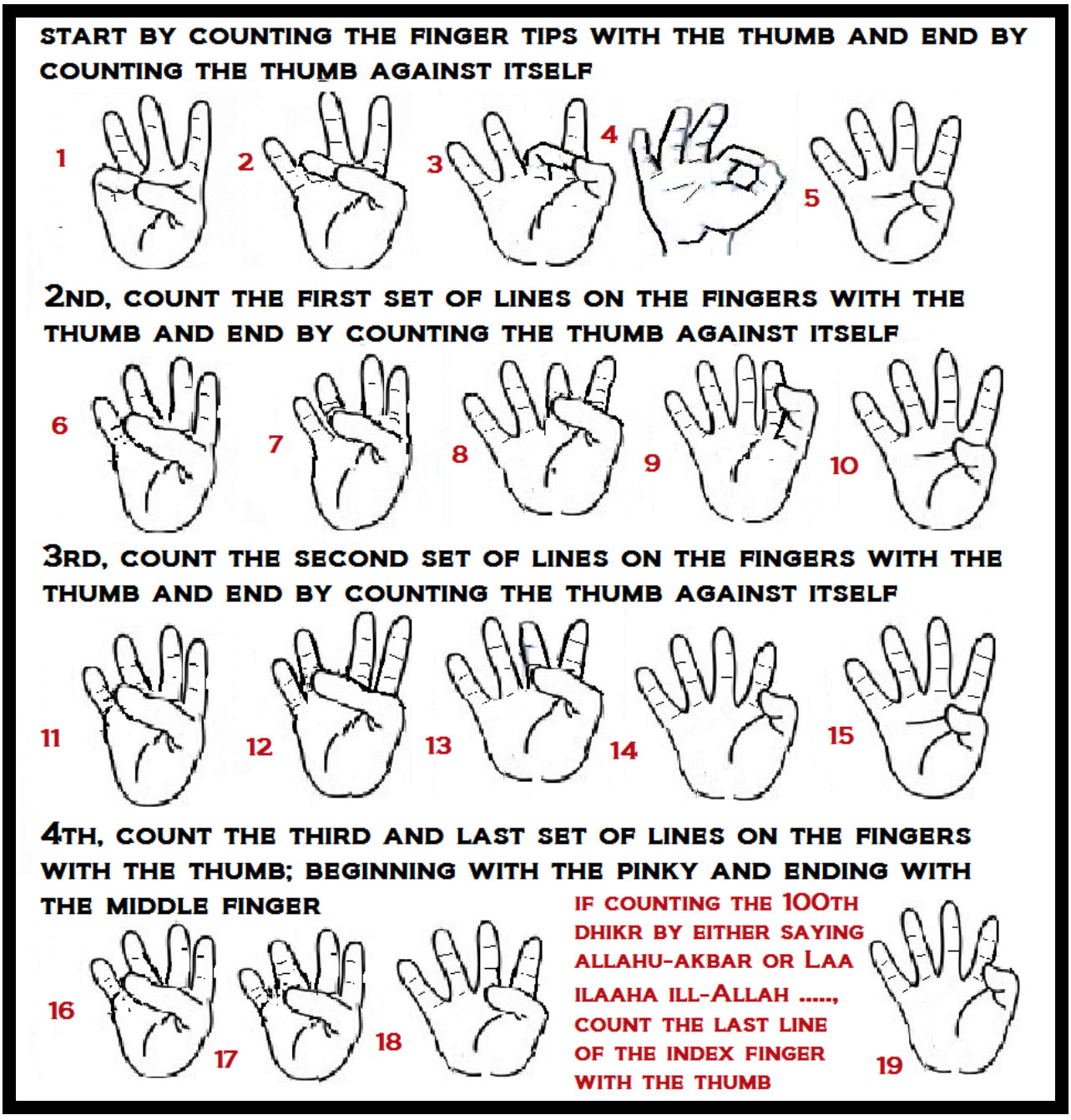
Lillaah) ten times, and magnify Him (say Allahu akbar) ten times.' I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)counting this on his fingers. He said: 'That makes one hundred and fifty on the tongue, and one thousand five hundred (hasanaat) in the scales.' [Translator's note: each of three phrases repeated ten times makes thirty; multiplied by the number of daily prayers, which is five, makes one hundred and fifty. Each of these good deeds of the tongue will be rewarded with ten hasanaat which will be added to the total of good deeds to be weighed in the balance or scales on the Day of Judgment]...."

Performing dhikr either on the fingers or through the use of other objects:

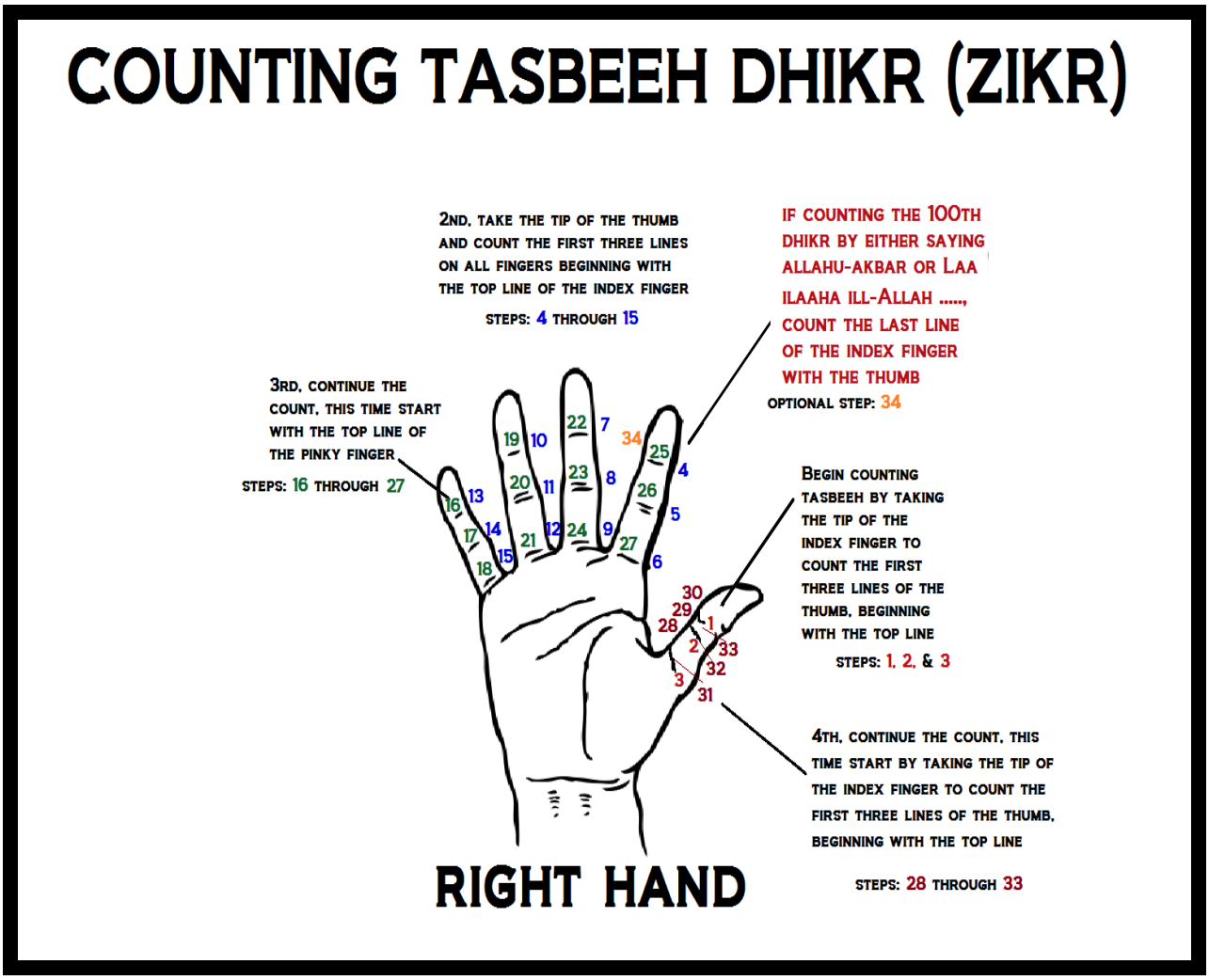
The evidence for performing dhikr with the fingers of the right hand is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Ubayd-Allaah ibn 'Umar ibn Maysarah and Muhammad ibn Qudaamah, among others, were reported to have said that Aththaam told them from al-A'mash from Ataa' ibn al-Saa'ib from his father from Abd-Allaah ibn Amr who said: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) counting the tasbeeh.' Ibn Qudaamah said: 'With his right hand**.'" Also, another hadith collected by Abu Dawud that was narrated by Abdullah Bin Amr Bin al-'Aas reports as follows: "**I saw the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) keep count of tasbeeh by closing**

the fingers." What is more, the evidence pertaining to what should be done in the process of closing the fingers in dhikr, namely closing the fingers together and counting the joints is a hadith in the collection of Tirmidhi that was narrated by Yaseera who was reported to have said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.)told women: 'Engage in tasebeeh, tahleel and taqdees (i.e. engage in various forms of Zikr) and keep count with the joints of the fingers. on the Day of Qiyaamah, these fingers will be questioned and they will be made to speak**."



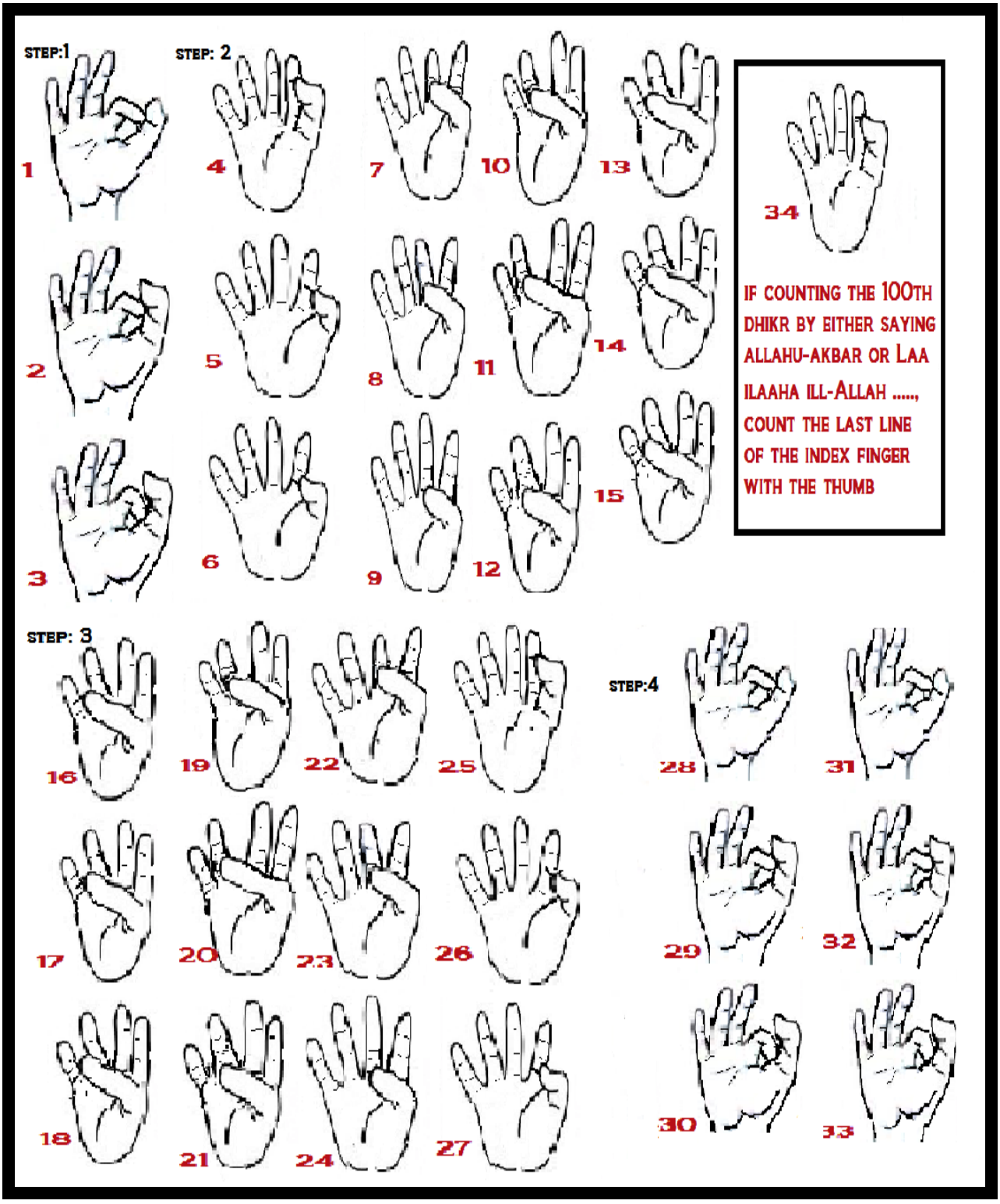

START BY COUNTING THE FINGER TIPS WITH THE THUMB AND END BY COUNTING THE THUMB AGAINST ITSELF
1
2
3
4
5
2ND, COUNT THE FIRST SET OF LINES ON THE FINGERS WITH THE THUMB AND END BY COUNTING THE THUMB AGAINST ITSELF
6
7
8
9
10
3RD, COUNT THE SECOND SET OF LINES ON THE FINGERS WITH THE THUMB AND END BY COUNTING THE THUMB AGAINST ITSELF
11
12
13
14
15
4TH, COUNT THE THIRD AND LAST SET OF LINES ON THE FINGERS WITH THE THUMB; BEGINNING WITH THE PINKY AND ENDING WITH THE MIDDLE FINGER
16
17
18
IF COUNTING THE 100TH DHIKR BY EITHER SAYING ALLAHU-AKBAR OR LAA ILAAHA ILL-ALLAH ....., COUNT THE LAST LINE OF THE INDEX FINGER WITH THE THUMB
19

- In the above diagram, begin the counting by using the tip of the thumb to count the finger tips and lines of the joints; starting with the tip of the thumb against the tip of the pinky finger. (**It is strongly encouraged to perform the act of worship on the right hand**)


COUNTING TASBEEH DHIKR (ZIKR)
2ND, TAKE THE TIP OF THE THUMB AND COUNT THE FIRST THREE LINES ON ALL FINGERS BEGINNING WITH THE TOP LINE OF THE INDEX FINGER
STEPS: 4 THROUGH 15
IF COUNTING THE 100TH DHIKR BY EITHER SAYING ALLAHU-AKBAR OR LAA ILAAHA ILL-ALLAH ....., COUNT THE LAST LINE OF THE INDEX FINGER WITH THE THUMB
OPTIONAL STEP: 34
3RD, CONTINUE THE COUNT, THIS TIME START WITH THE TOP LINE OF THE PINKY FINGER
STEPS: 16 THROUGH 27
BEGIN COUNTING TASBEEH BY TAKING THE TIP OF THE INDEX FINGER TO COUNT THE FIRST THREE LINES OF THE THUMB, BEGINNING WITH THE TOP LINE
STEPS: 1, 2, & 3
4TH, CONTINUE THE COUNT, THIS TIME START BY TAKING THE TIP OF THE INDEX FINGER TO COUNT THE FIRST THREE LINES OF THE THUMB, BEGINNING WITH THE TOP LINE
STEPS: 28 THROUGH 33
RIGHT HAND

- Begin counting tasbeeh by using the tip of the index finger to count the first three lines of the thumb, beginning with the top line. 2nd, take the tip of the thumb and count the first three lines on all fingers beginning with the top line of the index finger. 3rd, continue the count, this time start with the top line of the pinky finger and continue until finished counting the index finger. 4th, continue the count, this time start by taking the tip of the index finger to count the first three lines of the

thumb, beginning with the top line (the lines of the thumb are counted a total of 9 times).



- According to Shaykh Assim Al-Hakeem: "There is no explicit statement with regard to the exact manner in which the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) performed dhikr with his right hand; i.e., the manner of counting on the finger joints, other than the number of times for saying each. All what is known is that one should make dhikr on the right hand with their fingers, as this is the Sunnah."

The evidence for using objects other than the fingers of the right hand to perform dhikr is the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Sa'd Bin Abi Waqqaas narrated: "**The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) noticed some date-stones or pebbles placed in front of one of his wives with which she was making Tasbeeh....**"

Furthermore, all four Madhabs even permit the use of dhikr beads; and scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi, Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, and Imam Badr al-Din al-`Ayni, explicitly permitted the use of prayer beads.

Likewise, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen (al-Liqa' al-Maftooh, 3/30) was asked whether using the masbahah for tasbeeh is bid'ah, and his reply was: "It is better not to do tasbeeh with the masbahah, but it is not bid'ah, because there is a basis for it, which is the fact that some of the Sahaabah did tasbeeh with pebbles; but the Messenger (P.B.U.H.) taught that tasbeeh with the fingers is better, as he said, 'Count with the

fingertips, for they will be made to speak.' Doing tasbeeh with the masbahah is not haram or bid'ah, but it is better not to do it, because the one who does tasbeeh with the masbahah has shunned something better. Using the masbahah may also be contaminated with some element of showing off; because, we see some people carrying masbahahs that contain a thousand beads, as if they are telling people, 'Look at me, I do a thousand tasbeehs!' Secondly, those who use the masbahah for tasbeeh are usually absent-minded and not focused, so you see them doing tasbeeh with the beads, but their gaze is wandering all over the place, which indicates that they are not really concentrating. It is better to do tasbeeh with one's fingers, preferably using the right hand rather than the left, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to count his tasbeeh on his right hand. If a person counts his tasbeeh using both hands, there is nothing wrong with that, but it is better to use the right hand only." Similarly, Shaykh Jalaal-ud-deen As-Suyootee a famous Shaafi'i Mujtahid Imam, elaborated on the issue in his book Al Haawi lil Fataawee, wherein he was reported to have said: "Counting the times one says Subhaan Allah on one's fingers is superior to doing so on dhikr beads because of the hadith of Abu Dawud wherein Abdullah Ibn Amr reportedly said, "**I saw Allah's messenger (P.B.U.H.) counting the tasbeeh on the right [hand]**"); though it has been said that if the person

saying it (dhikr) is safe from mistakes, then his fingers are better; however, if not, then saying it on dhikr beads is more suitable." Lastly, Shaykh As-Suyootee is also reported to have said: "Some of the most renowned Muslims have used rosaries, those from whom the Religion is taken, and whom are relied upon, such as Abu Hurayrah who had a string with two thousand knots in it, and he did not used to sleep except after saying Subhaan Allah on it twelve thousand times."

In view of the above mentioned information, it is important to note that Abu Khaliyl Ja'ad Ibn Sylvester at Maktabatul Uthaymeen in *A Reply To The Claims That Imam As-Suyootee Supported The Practice of Subhah* was reported to have said: "The great scholar, As-Suyootee (RA), noted that due to the hadith of Ibn Amr noted above, it is better to count the tasbeeh on one's fingers. Furthermore, As-Suyootee noted that 'It has been said (Qeelaa), that this is better if the person is safe from losing count, whereas if he is not safe from that, then the beads are more suitable. Then he gave the example of Abu Hurayrah. We ask Allah to reward Imam As-Suyootee for mentioning what has been said, and we do this out of sincerity. As a note however, it should be noted that the report alluded to is not one that has been graded as Sahih or Hasan, rather its grade is weak. It is transmitted by way of Abdul Waahid Ibn Moosaa from Mu'aym Ibn

Muharrar Ibn Abee Hurayrah from his grandfather [Abu Hurayrah], '**That he had a string with one thousand knots on it and he would not sleep until he had done his Tasbeeh on it.**' There is another narration whose meaning he has combined into this statement about Abu Hurayrah, that is reported via Ikrimah from Abu Hurayrah that he said, 'Astaghfrullaah' twelve thousand times, but this report is disconnected after Ikrimah, for he is not known by the Hadith Scholars to have actually heard from Abu Hurayrah (See Al Inaabah by Ibn Hajar). Nevertheless, it does not mention dhikr beads at all (rather another object other than the fingers of the right hand). So it has nothing to do with this discussion either way. As for the narration about the string with Abu Hurayrah, it is weak because its chain contains Nu'aym Ibn Muharrar, whose condition among hadith narrators is that of an unknown. It is for this reason that what Suyootee labeled as 'better' - is indeed better - May Allah reward him - rather there is no authentic evidence to prove that it was commanded, and otherwise it would contradict the command, since it has not been authentically reported that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) nor any of his companions used dhikr beads. Furthermore, some of the companions and their followers were reported to have rejected alternatives to the fingers in this regard." Allah knows best!

In summary, the point of views presented from the above mentioned evidences proves that the consensus among the scholars is that performing dhikr on the fingers of the right hand is the established practice of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Nevertheless, one is permitted to use dhikr beads if needed since there is evidence proving that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) did not "prohibit" the use of the other items used by the companions to perform this act of worship; such as those who used date stones and pebbles. The evidence that the Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) silence; i.e., not prohibiting the use of other than the fingers of the right hand to perform dhikr is the hadith of Tirmidhi wherein Salman al-Farsi reportedly said: "**The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) was asked about animal fat, cheese, and fur, he replied, 'The halal is that which Allah has made lawful in His Book and the haram is that which He has forbidden, and that concerning which He is silent, He has permitted as a favor to you.'**"

Special note: If one is ill or disabled, they are permitted to perform salatul Istikharah while either sitting or lying down. The evidence for this ruling is the hadith of Bukhari wherein Imran ibn Husain reportedly said: "**I was suffering from hemorrhoids (piles), so I asked the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) and he said: Pray standing; if you are not able, then**

sitting down; if you are not able to do so, then pray lying down." It is also worth mentioning that another hadith in the collection of Bukhari that was narrated by Imran ibn Husain also reports: "**I asked the Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) about the prayer of a man while sitting, so he said: 'He who prays standing, that is better; he who prays sitting, his reward is half that of the former (normal salat). He who prays lying down (and in another narration: reclining), has half the reward of the one who sits**."

- Khattaabi said, "The meaning of 'Imran's hadith is intended for a sick person who is able to undergo hardship and stand with difficulty. Hence the reward of praying sitting has been made half of the reward of praying standing; encouraging him to pray standing while allowing him to sit." Ibn Hajr said in Fath al-Baari (2/468): "This deduction is valid."